Ondine in Germany

Dance and Dancers

APRIL 1959

This month's full ballet guide

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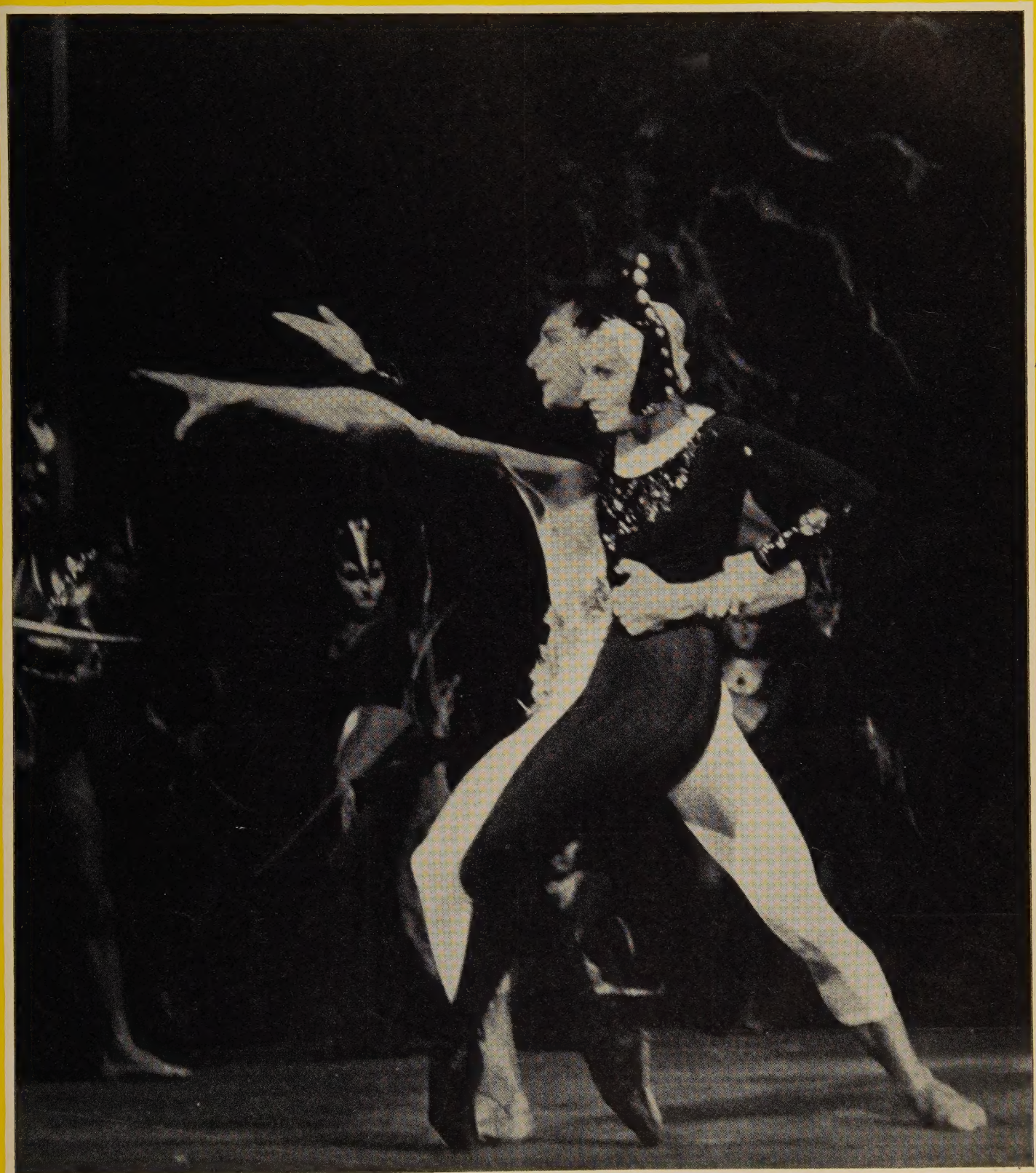

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Personality of the Month

LUDMILLA TCHERINA

LUDMILLA TCHERINA is a typical, if rather glamorous, example of that French invention the *danseuse étoile* who is not a ballerina. In the Anglo-American ballet world it is the high priestesses of classicism who rule the rituals. To be sure, here and there a Nora Kaye, Paula Hinton or a Julia Farron emerges who possesses a star appeal that shines outside the classic ballet, yet these are very much the exceptions. While the French are lucky enough to have Chauviré and Vyroubova, they have also a group of dancers who are quite unclassifiable in the normal ballet hierarchy and yet are the darlings of the Parisian public. This select band of *grande dames de la danse* includes Jeanmaire. Marchand and Ludmilla Tcherina.

Tcherina was born in 1925 and studied under Preobrajenska, and made her début with Serge Lifar's Nouveau Ballet de Monte Carlo just after the war. It was with this company that she made her London début at the Cambridge Theatre in 1946. Since then she has become at least as well known for her film appearances as she is as a dancer, and consequently when she formed her own company earlier this year it came as no surprise that its plans included the prominent participation of a number of film directors.

By the time these words appear London audiences will have had an opportunity of seeing the Tcherina company, and of judging whether it does in fact live up to its claim to "shake ballet out of its traditional apathy and create really great entertainment with popular standards". Certainly it sounds as though this company — which reputedly has spent eighty million francs on its repertory — intends to produce ballet on a lavish scale. But lavishness is a quality that always seems to have been associated with Tcherina, as all who can recall those films *The Red Shoes* and *Tales of Hoffmann* will readily agree. What the final results will be of this experiment in ballet production we cannot yet say, but certainly anyone as beautiful as Tcherina will always be a welcome addition to the London scene.

The front cover picture of Tcherina is by Serge Lido

April 1959 10th YEAR OF PUBLICATION Vol. 10 No. 4

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Associate Editor:* CLIVE BARNES
Assistant Editor: E. C. MASON
WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

THE MISSING THIRD

THE statement in the souvenir programme of the Royal Ballet's Gala that "over a third of the Royal Ballet is in the other half of the world" brought home the fact, which many may have forgotten, that there is quite a lot of Royal Ballet still in the Antipodes. For the general public these overseas tours — in Europe, in America and in the lower half of the globe — have little more interest than a tour of our provincial cities. The performances are mainly routine ones such as can be seen in London or the provinces and the shortening of lines of communication across the globe have now robbed these tours of any sense of "occasion". But for the past six months a section of the Royal Ballet has been keeping the banner of British ballet flying in the section of the globe enjoying summer while we suffered winter. They have had great triumphs and sometimes they have been subjected to sterner criticism — in fact the whole tour has fallen into the now all too familiar pattern, but I am sure that they have acquitted themselves well and will doubtless inspire future antipodean enterprises while having added lustre to themselves. It has all become a part of the day's work, but was work well done.

In many ways this separation has proved to be one of the most valuable developing periods in the whole of the Royal Ballet's history. Not only have the principal dancers of the major section of the company had a chance of getting away from Bow Street and to mature by dancing every night on the other side of the world, but their absence from the home team has given others the opportunity to take over rôles that would not ordinarily have been the case. For instance, it was possible to give a gala the other night without Fonteyn and for the dancing of Nerina, Beriosova and Blair to be such that her absence was not too deeply felt. This does not mean to say that Fonteyn was not missed, she will always be missed when she is away, but it does mean that her absence no longer radically upsets the balance of the company as it used to in the past. In reverse, Australia has proved to be the trial ground for a group of the other company's soloists and they have now achieved an eminence that would never have been possible in this country. It was an extremely happy idea of Dame Ninette de Valois to give some of these artists a chance to dance major rôles in full-length classics with the Covent Garden company immediately on their return to England.

It is of course all part of the general integration of the two Royal Ballets, and one thing becomes abundantly clear out of the misty confusion of the past eighteen months — that the Royal Ballet can keep a home and touring company permanently on the go without anybody having to suffer unduly. This has been the lesson that has been learnt from the Australian experiment.

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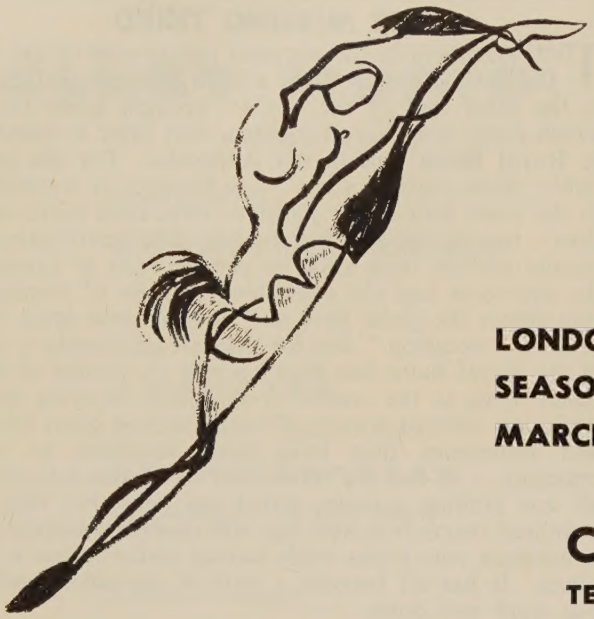

LUDMILLA TCHERINA THEATRE BALLET

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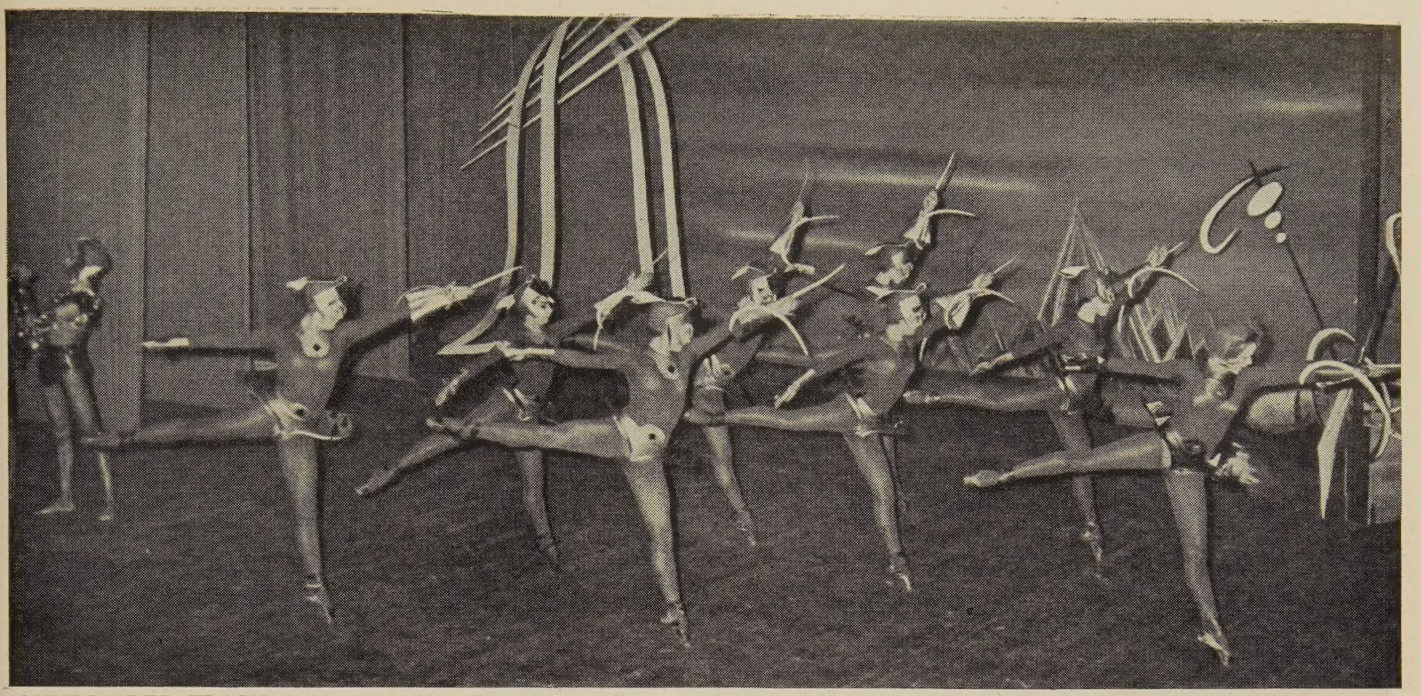


GUNPOWDER FLASH: *The* corps de ballet *of Ludmilla Tcherina's Theatre Ballet in the new work,* Gunpowder Flash. *Photo : Lido.*

Spring Visitors Come to London

For several Springs after the war, there was such an invasion of foreign dancers and companies that the period between April and July became known as the "Spring Dancing". Latterly London has been rather deserted by foreign dance visitors. This year it seems that the "Spring Dancing" has returned because in addition to the groups mentioned below we can expect companies such as Pilar Lopez Ballet Espanol, José Greco's company, Maurice Béjart's Ballet Theatre and Jerome Robbins Ballets U.S.A. in the not too distant future.

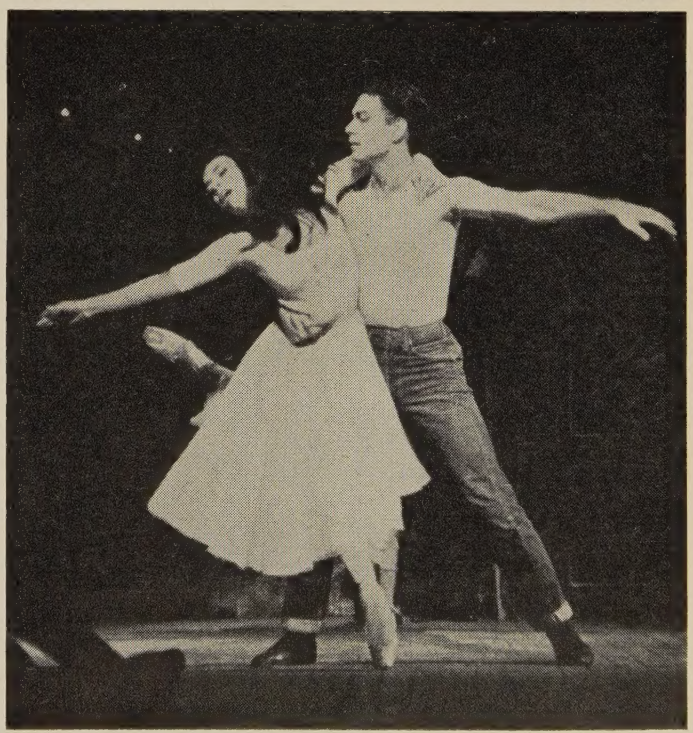
THE first of the foreign visitors to come to London this Spring is Ludmilla Tcherina's Theatre Ballet. Oddly enough, the theatre in which they are appearing is the same as that in which Tcherina made her London début when she came to the Cambridge Theatre with Serge Lifar's Nouveau Ballet de Monte Carlo just after the war.

Since those days, Tcherina has made an international name for herself by her many film appearances. A very beautiful woman, she has many of the qualities of Ida Rubin-

Continued on page 7

HEARTS ARE TRUMPS: Milko Sparemblek in Don Lurio's light-hearted ballet for Tcherina's Theatre Ballet. Photo : Lido.

THE LOVERS OF TERUEL: *Tcherina and Vassili Sulich in the ballet which caused a great sensation during the company's Paris season. Photo : Lido.*



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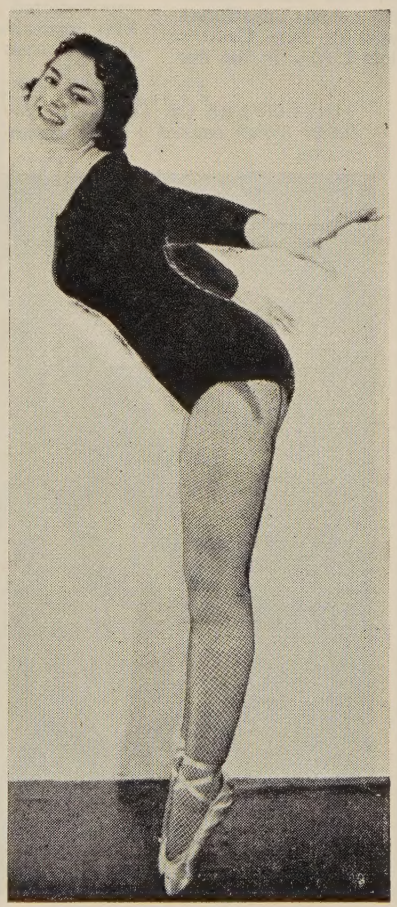

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CARMEN AMAYA (right) who comes to the Westminster Theatre with her company for a six-week season.

stein, who used to appear as fabulous beauties with the Diaghilev Ballet and who later ran her own company and was responsible for commissioning a number of important works as well as even more important ballet scores.

The emphasis of Tcherina's company will be on dance drama rather than on dance for itself. Her work in films has given her a new angle on the dramatic side of ballet and she has used several notable names in the film world for the production of these works.

The company also brings back to London those two noted Yugoslav artists, Milko Sparemblek and Vassili Sulich, who scored such a success when they appeared at Sadler's Wells in the company of Milorad Miskovitch last year.

Carmen Amaya

THEN, on Easter Saturday, a very old friend returns to the London public and to the intimate Westminster Theatre, which should be ideal for showing her particular art. It was Carmen Amaya who first turned London into a Hispanophile city just after the war. Coming to the Princes Theatre with her family, friends and relations she brought the first taste of exoticism to a drab post-war world. The stamping and the frenzy and the feeling that nobody quite knew what was going to happen next, drew London to the feet of this remarkable gypsy dynamo. Born in Granada in 1920 she toured her family all over the world and in Buenos Aires a special theatre was built for her and bears her name.

She has developed a form of flamenco dancing which is something very personal to her own fiery nature and is at her best when she comes on and dances in trousers. You will look in vain for the refinements of flamenco art in her work but instead you will find a dynamic personality who, by her very force and drive, has done much to enrich the appreciation of the dance art of her native country.

Tamara Toumanova

THE first of this group of dance visitors (and the Spring and Summer will see many visiting foreign dance groups) ends with Tamara Toumanova, who will open a season at Sadler's Wells Theatre on April 13. Toumanova, the original "baby ballerina" and called the "black pearl of the Russian ballet", is also an old friend of London audiences. She was first in London with Colonel de Basil's Ballet Russe in 1932 and then later she starred in Balanchine's Les Ballets 1933 at the Savoy Theatre. Since then she has appeared on numerous occasions with Russian companies, with the de Cuevas Company, in concerts and with Festival Ballet. She, like Tcherina, has appeared in several films. Her performances will be different from any in which she has previously appeared in London because, partnered by Wladimir Oukhtomsky, she will appear in a number of *pas de deux* and *soli* of considerable variety and accompanied by an orchestra.

TAMARA TOUMANOVA (right) with Wladimir Oukhtomsky in Romeo and Juliet. *They can be seen at the Sadler's Wells Theatre for four weeks.*

HENZE WITH NEW CAST: Hans Werner Henze, who composed the score of Ondine *for Frederick Ashton and the Royal Ballet, is here seen (right) with Franz Baur and Dulce Anaya, who played Palemon and Ondine in Alan Carter's version of the ballet for Munich. Photo: Sabine Toepffer.*

ONDINE - in Munich

Just over three months after the world première of Frederick Ashton's Ondine **for the Royal Ballet, Alan Carter, who himself was once a member of the Royal Ballet, mounted his version of the work using the same score but with a different approach to the story. Here the differences of the productions at Covent Garden and Munich are compared.**

by KARL VIKTOR PRINZ ZU WIED

MARGOT FONTEYN'S and Michael Somes' guest performance in *Giselle* in the Bavarian State Opera on December 2nd was a glamorous finale of the greatest ballet season Munich has ever had.

On January 25 our Opera Ballet Company presented, as the first big event of this year, their version of *Ondine*. As this is the second production of Frederick Ashton's and Hans Werner Henze's full-length ballet, an analysis of the respective pros and cons of the London and the Munich versions is certainly worth while. As in London, the story is located in southern Italy. but here it is transferred to the present. Among the characters there are no noblemen, no court society, but — as in Perrot's ballet — only plain fishermen and village girls, dressed in blue jeans, beach shirts and shabby but colourful skirts.

Alan Carter did not attempt to produce a fairy tale ballet in the traditional manner, the principal feature of his conception being that Ondine, Tirrenio and the entire host of water-sprites are nothing but visions of the youth Palemon, who at moments penetrates into an imaginary world of his own and eventually perishes in it, while the other village people and especially Palemon's fiancée Beatrice (who here takes the place of Lady Berta) are worried and frightened by the boy's recurrent fits of absent-mindedness. The process of turning the plot into a psychological (or psychopathological) case leaves little room for de la Motte-Fouqué's romanticism, but this adaptation is nonetheless romantic in its own very special way, although it is rather difficult to carry this idea through the whole ballet consistently.

The outline of the action is very much the same as in the Covent Garden version, except for the second act. As Ondine is seen by Palemon only, there can be no rivalry between her and Beatrice, the one dramatic possibility of this episode (anyhow the weakest of the whole ballet) is eclipsed, and it thus becomes a mere and rather dull display of stage mechanics, with sporadic *entrées* by Ondine and Tirrenio.

Fabius von Gugel designed the sets, and I must confess that I preferred them to de Nobili's. Loveliest of them all is the décor for the first scene, which shows the terrace of a broken-down baroque palazzo — among the remnants of which Palemon has set up his shed — with a bright Mediterranean sky and sun-drenched colours.

Palemon's and Ondine's mystic wedding is celebrated by Tirrenio in the wilderness of the adjoining deserted park. In this set too many shades of green create a chilly atmosphere, which lacks the magic of de Nobili's enchanted forest. I was pleased with the hazy early-morning light of the harbour scene, only the stage is too crowded with an enormous ship, an antique temple, the quay and structures of all kinds, and when the boat goes out to sea, the technicians do not manage to create the illusion of actual movement, nor, for that matter, does the choreography.

The set in the third act — towering debris of the palazzo and a huge staircase — is a shade too naturalistic and definitely too heavy, but I liked it better than the third-act-Swan-Lake-ambiance at Covent Garden. I did not care for the navy-cut beards of some of the tritons, but as a whole both costumes and make-up for the entire cast were satisfactory.

Having heard Henze's score for the third time I think that it is, if not positively original, certainly not without merit, brilliantly orchestrated and, in spite of its intricate rhythms, danceable. It serves its purpose pretty well, although, with the exception of the weird furioso of the *divertissement,* it rather illustrates than "carries" the ballet.

Speaking of the production as a whole, it seems to me that the first and second acts are by far more satisfactory at Covent Garden, while the Munich version is, in general, in better keeping with the music; I definitely prefer Alan Carter's third act. The assault of the water-sprites, i.e., the *divertissement* (in which Ondine, in disguise, performs bravura work with lifts "à la Russe", elevation and dazzling pirouettes), provides a terrific climax, which very effectively prepares the ground for the tragic last *pas de deux.*

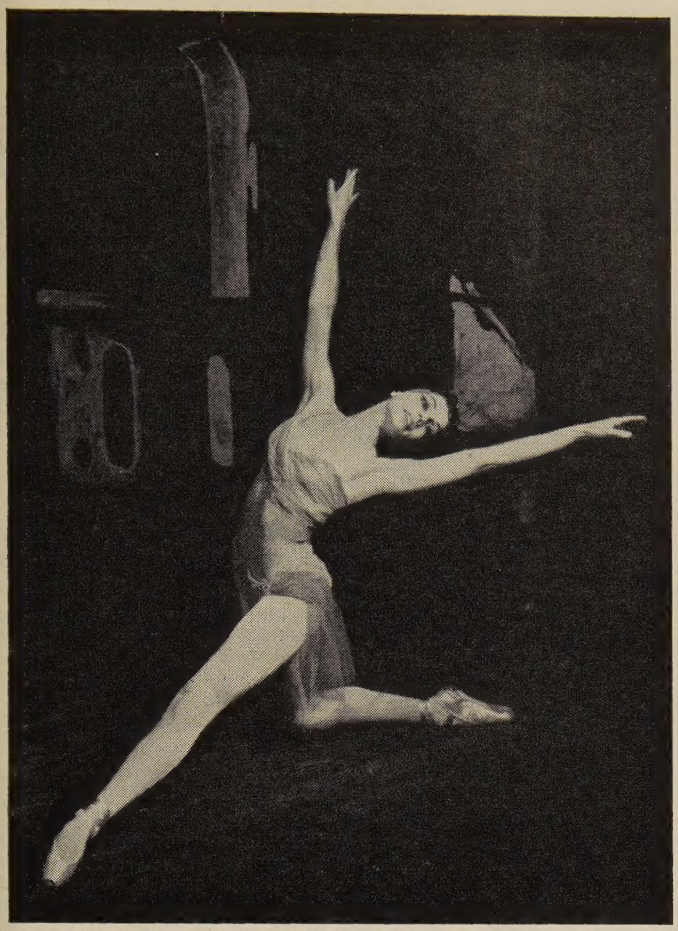
The weak spots in Ashton's production are, in my opinion, the insufficiently developed characters of Palemon and Berta. In Munich the main interest is, of course, also concentrated on Ondine, but Beatrice, Palemon and Tirrenio are at least given a fair chance to dance and mime. Tirrenio, in particular, has to perform a real virtuoso part.

An essential characteristic of Alan Carter's choreography is that on the "earthly" side only Beatrice does point work, whereas in the phantom world practically everything is danced *sur pointes.* All the variations and *pas de deux* for Ondine are highly ingenious, though quite different in style from Ashton's inventions. As for the group movements, certain parts, such as the first *entrée* of the village people and the wedding dance in the third act, look somewhat disorganised. On the other hand, most of the dances of the water-sprites are interesting, notably in the *divertissement,* which, in fact, is much more than just a *divertissement,* and suggests the onslaught of the unconquered forces of nature. Herein Alan Carter has once more given evidence of his capacity to blend contrasting rhythms. His work exploited the dynamic possibilities of the score to the full, which, in my opinion, is not the case in Ashton's choreography.

It would not make sense to compare the general standard of dancing of this company with that of the Royal Ballet, but I am glad to say that the entire company gave a very satisfactory performance, despite the difficulties of the music as well as of the choreography. It gives credit to Alan Carter's work as a teacher that he was able to undertake this task.

Inge Bertl (Beatrice) was competent (in later performances Annette Chappell danced this part), Franz Baur, as the romantic dreamer Palemon, showed some good character dancing as well as miming. The part of Tirrenio is in this version the most brilliant one on the male side, and Heino Hallhuber did his best to excite the audience with double *assemblés* and so on.

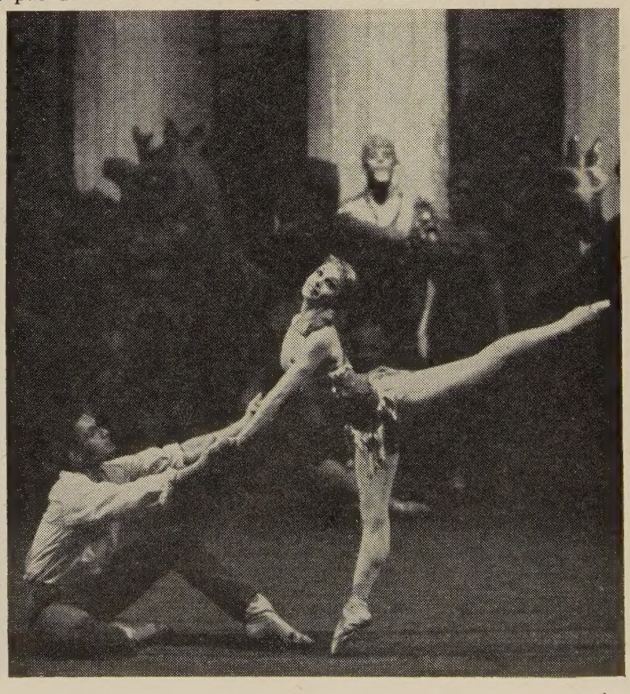
Although this production is not so entirely focused on Ondine herself as the Covent Garden version, nearly everything depends on her performance She is not a storybook character in the accepted theatrical sense, but a mere vision — elusive, unreal, but always present. She is expected to dissolve into thin air at any moment and she must command the stage at the same time. It is obvious that this conception is quite different from Ashton's, whose Ondine is conceived in the true



A NEW ONDINE: Two studies of Dulce Anaya in the title rôle. This Cuban dancer, who last year was with the company in Stuttgart, has now moved to Munich, where she has enjoyed a very great personal success. *Photo: Rudolf Betz.*

spirit of de la Motte-Fouqué. Furthermore, the part is extremely exhausting because of the terrific technical demands of the *divertissement*. The rôle was made for Dulce Anaya — and this young and nimble Cuban dancer might almost have been made for it with her delicate build, lovely feet, radiant eyes and bewitching smile. She is one of those rare ballerinas who combine lyrical warmth with a very strong and clean technique, perfect balance, splendid elevation and exquisite *port de bras*, who possesses an infinite softness of movement and at the same time a crisp and wiry quality that reminds one of Melissa Hayden. Her spirited and sensitive dancing made the *première* the event it was — a milestone on the road of German ballet.

SPRITE AND MORTAL: Dulce Anaya, as Ondine, in a pas de deux *with Franz Baur as Palemon.*



Harlequin in April

First given at Sadler's Wells Theatre on May 8, 1951. First given by the Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on March 5, 1959. A pantomime with divertissements choreographed by John Cranko. Music by Richard Arnell. Designed by John Piper. Lighting by William Bundy.

PROLOGUE — Pierrot's Song ..... STANLEY HOLDEN

Pierrot is the fool, the human muddler, sometimes likeable, sometimes interfering.

ACT I — April

Harlequin ..... DAVID BLAIR

Plants ..... ANTOINETTE SIBLEY and *corps de ballet*

Harlequin here represents human aspiration re-born with the flowers in April. This aspiration makes it possible for him to break away from the plants who are earthbound and self-sufficient.

ENTR'ACTE — Pierrot's Violin Concerto

ACT II — The Sky

Columbine ..... ANTOINETTE SIBLEY

The Unicorn ..... GARY BURNE, RONALD HYND

Magical Duplications of the Unicorn ..... *The Corps de Ballet*

The Unicorn, traditional guardian of chastity, represents the barrier which separates Harlequin from the perpetual promise of Columbine, his ideal.

EPILOGUE — Pierrot's Masquerade

CHOREOGRAPHY

"IT'S pretentious!" I heard one man say; "I just couldn't understand it," said another; "Why trouble to do it at all?" added a third. They were talking about Covent Garden's revival of *Harlequin in April,* and I could see their points of view — they were all honourable men. Cranko's muddled, pretentious, splendid ballet had belatedly arrived at Covent Garden, and people were enjoying themselves being either puzzled or superior. How pleasant to say, "I'm afraid this kind of thing is way above my head" — when you mean just the opposite — and how easy it is to pick holes in the ballet's already pitted crust, exploring with diligence each of its gaping flaws.

So, it's pretentious. Good! I'm fed up with the modest and the retiring, the never-could-bes and the never-wases, the insipid and the fearful, the ballets that know their place, and the places that know their ballet. Why are the English so afraid of the pretentious? Why is it the favourite, okay tribal smear of critical disgust? Are we too afraid of being taken for an intellectual ride, or of being bumped-off with thoughts we do not wish to think? A pretension — according to the dictionary — is a "justifiable claim", and it seems to me that too many people do not consider the justice of its claims before tagging a work with the dirty word — "pretentious".

Here is a ballet, like for example *Age of Anxiety,* that has something to say. Such an attempt at intellectual communication is not essential in a ballet, or indeed in any work of art, but nor is it something to be mocked at with the unselfconscious gusto of grubby urchins watching a love-scene on the movies. In *Harlequin in April* Cranko is trying to say something significant about the human predicament, and while he may or may not have been successful, it is surely relevant and even important to remember what he was trying to do. This was not meant to be another *Pineapple Poll* or *Mam'zelle Angot,* and only a poor-minded man would consider it finer to climb Ben Nevis than to die on the slopes of Everest.

But is Cranko's ballet intelligible? Nowadays there is a tendency to assume that when one cannot understand a work, the artist has automatically failed. Yet has his audience not a duty to meet him halfway? If you look at modern painting with your eyes blinkered with preconceptions, and your mind shuttered against fresh experience, it is naturally impossible to accept the unfamiliar. The same is true of *Harlequin in April,* and here appreciation is considerably hindered by it being far from completely successful in its intentions. Con-

HARLEQUIN RE-BORN : (Above) David Blair, as Harlequin, is re-born with the flowers in April. He is clothed by Pierrot (Stanley Holden) in the picture below. *Photos : Houston Rogers.*

sequently it suffers not only from its aspirations — which frighten off all who regard ballet merely as a relaxation — but also from its occasional imperfections, so that people who might otherwise take it seriously can be so concerned with its flaws as to forget the important nature of its achievements.

It is unfortunate that Cranko's symbolism looks rather muddled, and the more closely it is examined the more muddled it tends to become. Is — and this is basic — Harlequin intended to represent a man like us or an artist? Harlequin's thwarting by the Unicorns — who the programme tells us are "traditional guardians of chastity" — can in its context surely only mean that a man has failed to get to bed with the woman of his desires. But "chastity" is here an unfortunate literary red-herring, and if the Unicorns are seen as the circumstances holding back an artist from total fulfilment, then the conception takes on a universal significance. Nor is the part played by Pierrot as clear as it might have been, and his relationships with the Plants, Harlequin, the Unicorns and Columbine provide an inconsistency permissible to a human character yet hard to support in a symbol. However, despite the eccentricities of the allegory its central theme — the birth, life and death of hope, ambition and/or aspirations — shines through the clouds quite clearly.

While Cranko's theme, not especially profound although valid, interesting and distinctly suitable, is made a useful literary basis for the ballet's structure, the choreography itself does not do all it might in illuminating it. Harlequin's solo, for example, in itself a well-constructed neo-classical variation, is little more expressive than is the hyperbolical dance invention that Lifar triple-piles upon *his* literary personifications. Much the same could be said of the *pas de deux* — less accomplished in its construction — between Harlequin and Columbine, and the mime episodes for Pierrot are left, apart from their basic framework, largely to the imagination of their interpreter. In the Plant episode, Cranko shows just what he can do with genuine dance imagery, and if the whole ballet had been carried out with the same skill it might well have been a choreographic masterpiece.

In many ways *Harlequin in April* is a work as much of promise as achievement, and this is not to deny its still very substantial virtues. But is it a ballet that should really have been revived in the sanctified atmosphere of Covent Garden? Cranko is a young man, would it not have been better to have commissioned a new work from him rather than this resuscitation from his salad days?

One answer to this natural question must be that *Harlequin in April* is a work of quite considerable historic importance, and on such a count alone could probably justify a place in the national repertory. More important still, it represents a type of ballet that is almost unknown in this country, and is a pretty good example of its *genre*. Finally, it must be admitted that so far Cranko has not again achieved anything quite as good as *Harlequin in April*, and its revival seems a very suitable point of departure for his new appointment with the company — for he has recently rejoined the Royal Ballet as a resident choreographer.

Despite the faults that have followed the enlargement of the décor (faults which happily do not fall within my present consideration) the ballet seems to have transferred remarkably well to its new home. Cranko has made a few amendments to the choreography — Harlequin's part, for example, appears to be now even more assertively brilliant than before — but for the most part he has wisely left well alone. The "Battle with the Unicorns" seemed not quite as effective as I recalled it, and I feel that the new spaciousness, helped along by far less sympathetic lighting, has robbed it of some mystery, and its original sense of epic conflict. Yet equally, other passages have gained from the transference, and the total result remains much as it ever did.

HARLEQUIN EMERGES: David Blair, as Harlequin, dances a solo as an expression of his independence. *Photo: Houston Rogers.*

Now, as in 1951, it is a ballet easily over-praised or under-estimated. Many people may find it lacking in initial impact and immediacy, yet the first impression it makes is unlikely to be the abiding one. Moreover, it so clearly represents a type of ballet theory — one which considers symbolism to be among the most priceless of those qualities belonging uniquely to the dance — that it is difficult, probably impossible, to discuss it without letting partisanship intervene. You may feel that *Harlequin in April* is far from being a complete success, but if you are one of those

PIERROT'S VIOLEN CONCERTO: In an entr'acte, Pierrot (Stanley Holden) attempts to play a violin concerto but is defeated. *Photo: Houston Rogers.*

who feel totally unsympathetic towards what Cranko was trying to do, then I suggest that the time will probably come when either you or I will be forced to lose interest in contemporary British ballet.

DANCING

TWO of the principals in the Covent Garden revival of *Harlequin in April* are survivors from the original Sadler's Wells production — David Blair and Stanley Holden. Blair's present Harlequin is spectacularly danced, with a bravura and finesse that would have been beyond the young Blair of 1951 vintage. This is also, naturally, a far more convincingly characterised and mature performance, yet it is still one which holds something back. On the first night at Covent Garden I could not help feeling that this astonishingly accomplished performance was in the ballet but not of it. However I understand that Blair was far from fit at the time — though one would never have guessed it from his remarkable dancing — and it may be that later he will be able to convey that sense of involvement with the work which the part needs.

Stanley Holden's rich and lovable Pierrot (a Sancho Panza to Harlequin's Quixote) was the same as ever only more so, the little extra in emphasis and dance-punch completely making good the difference in dimensions between the old proscenium opening and the new. Like Blair, he had sensibly broadened his interpretation for Covent Garden, and his dancing was exemplary. Holden has become a marvellous artist, and his portray of Pierrot trying in vain to entertain the audience until eventually, everything having conspired against him, he shuffles off dejectedly, is an exhibition of high comedy.

Patricia Miller's dual rôle of the plant-girl and Columbine has passed to Antoinette Sibley, and she brings to it an effortless and radiant distinction together with an economical perfection of movement that almost obscures the memory of her predecessor. But not quite — for the very elegance of Sibley seems to prevent her from tugging at my heart-strings in the way of a Miller. She dances the plant-girl in a manner that gives the choreography a plastic beauty it could hardly have hoped for, but where was Miller's bedraggled, timorous little creature clutching for life?

Clive Barnes.

ENTER COLUMBINE: Columbine (Antoinette Sibley) represents Harlequin's ideal. Two moments in the pas de trois. *Photos: Houston Rogers.*

MUSIC

IF more of Richard Arnell's music showed the skill and invention of his score for *Harlequin in April,* it would have added much to his reputation. Except for *The Angels* (1957), the composer has produced some of his best work for ballet. Its drama and colour has been a spur to his predominantly literary imagination, while the need to work closely with a choreographic scenario has curbed the uninhibited copiousness which has frequently inflated out of proportion his works for the concert hall. In harmonic language Arnell is so conservative as to offer little stimulus to the mind and no offence to the conventional ear.

In *Harlequin in April* the most striking features are its ingenious structure and clever sense of musical characterisation. The music expands and recedes with the growth and decline of Harlequin, punctuated by a lively and somewhat pathetic theme associated with Pierrot. A brief prelude neatly sets the mood of mingled striving and frustration, amid which a shrill tortured woodwind phrase announces Harlequin's impending birth. It grows in strength and contour with the character, flowering into a broad, romantic melody for the climatic *pas de deux* of Harlequin and Columbine.

A third subject, basically slurred chords opening and contracting in a ponderous, writhing manner on its first appearance, serves as a useful "general purpose" idea to convey the function of the earthbound and self-sufficient Plants, and to bind the other episodes together. Except for the *pas de deux* and some versions of Pierrot's theme there is little memorable melody as such, but I do not feel that there is any call for it in the dramatic context, and the insertion of melody for its own sake would undoubtedly have weakened the impact of the ballet as a whole.

What is more evident, to my mind, is a lack of musical contrast to point the difference in Cranko's choreographic intention between the earthbound first act and the "o'ervaulting ambition" of the second. In a sense this is the fault of Arnell's limited range of colour values. Although his orchestration is skilful enough, it is restricted in tone colour, much as a pictorial artist might use stock crayons instead of subtle blends of paint. The composer is prone to intensify musical significance merely by thickening his existing

orchestral texture, through duplicating woodwind parts, for example, or doubling horns with strings. A greater delicacy in this respect could have added variety to his music without disturbing its germinal nature, and allowed the ear to complement the eye instead of trailing along with it. Otherwise it is a competent score, well enough suited to its purpose, and one which gains from being heard at Covent Garden. The composer conducted the first two performances himself. When I heard it at the second (March 7) it was played with assurance and aplomb, suitably integrated into the production as a whole except for a few passages when it became overpoweringly ponderous in relation to the dancing. **Noël Goodwin.**

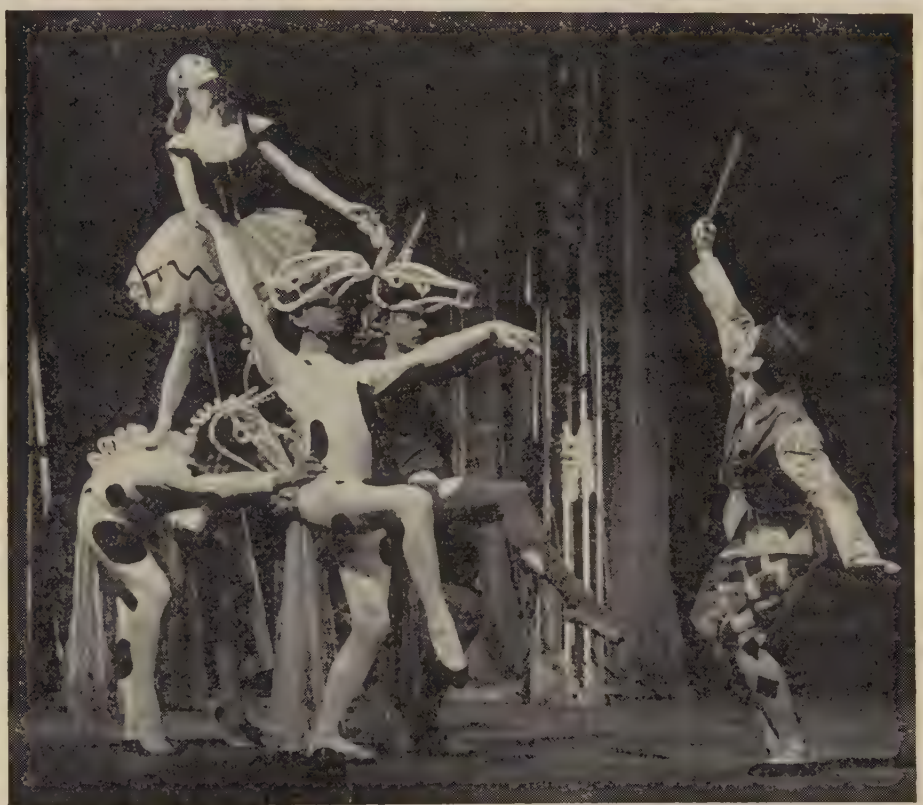
DECOR

BY an odd coincidence, the first performance of *Harlequin in April* at Covent Garden was preceded by Howard's *La Fête Etrange*, designed by Sophie Fedorovitch. Of the latter I recently wrote that it could possibly be given in any sized theatre because its basic design was so absolutely right. I remember being extremely enthusiastic about Piper's designs for *Harlequin* when it was first given at Sadler's Wells in 1951. Its strange, decayed proscenium, based I believe on the gutted theatre in Hanley where the Wells once lost everything in a fire, was mysteriously lit and gave the right atmosphere for an allegory about the theatre's eternal and immortal stock characters. Blown-up to fit the Covent Garden stage, this setting disintegrates in a way that the designer could never have intended. The inclusion of two light beige wings has now completely destroyed the feeling of suspension and undetermined distances. Now there is no mystery whatsoever, just nothing but some structures which bear no relation to anything. All of which points to the fact that the basic design was probably always weak and that it was originally saved by atmospheric lighting and the smallness of the stage making it possible for the power of the ballet to disguise all faults. Obviously it should have been re-designed for Covent Garden, keeping the original form but by adding wings and so on in order to make the proscenium look "meant". The flame drop-curtain has been painted in a deadly manner and no longer glows out, nor does it fit the proscenium; the sky for the Unicorn scene is equally lifeless.

Of course blame for this could be placed on the lighting, but although, at the first performance at any rate, the lighting was unimaginative, I doubt if even Jean Rosenthal could do much to hide the general haphazard structure. A great deal of the dancing took place in the dark while some unoccupied parts of the stage were bathed in light.

The costumes are the same as ever they were, though I would say that Harlequin's costume is brighter and less subtle than previously. I think that Piper has overcome the complications of presenting plant-masses on the stage and his fungoid-like all-over tights in earth greens and browns with their explosions of flowers in the coloured wigs look like an abstract colour film of mother nature's remarkable ways. The Unicorns, with their horsey structure headdresses, once smacked of "Festival of Britain" designing; today, they are far more effective in the spaces of the Royal Opera House, where they do not look so out of place.

Although I found the designing a disappointment compared with the impact it used to create, and this may have something to do with the ephemeral nature of stage design appreciation, nothing really diminishes my appreciation and affection for this intelligent ballet, which also has the advantage of making people think for a change. **Peter Williams.**



UNICORN INTERVENTION : Harlequin is separated from Columbine by the Unicorn (Gary Burne and Ronald Hynd in white) and by the Magical Duplications of this fabulous beast which is the traditional guardian of chastity. Photos : Houston Rogers.

PERFORMANCE DETAILS

Running Time

36 minutes.

Audience Reaction

13 calls on 1st night, including 2 with the lights up. Fairly warm applause, little cheering.

Press Reaction

6 stars — rave; 5 stars — enthusiastic; 4 stars — favourable; 3 stars — lukewarm; 2 stars — unfavourable; 1 star — pan.

Daily Express *****; *Daily Mail* *****; *Daily Telegraph* ***; *Financial Times* *****; *Manchester Guardian* ****; *News Chronicle* ****; *Observer* *****; *Sunday Times* ****; *The Times* **.

THE LADY AND THE UNICORN : *Claude Bessy, as the Lady, with Michel Renault, as the Knight, in the picture on the left. Liane Daydé, as the Unicorn, in Cocteau's ballet based on the famous French tapestries (right). Photos : Lido.*

La Dame à la Licorne

First given at the Paris Opéra on January 28, 1959. Scenario by Jean Cocteau. Music by Jacques Chailley. Décor and costumes by Jean Cocteau. Choreographer, Heinz Rosen.

The Unicorn ..... LIANE DAYDE
The Lady ..... CLAUDE BESSY
The Knight ..... MICHEL RENAULT
Apparitions ..... JACQUELINE RAYET, CLAIRE MOTTE, VAUCHELLE
Knights ..... MAX BOZZONI, ALEXANDRE KALIOUJNY, LUCIEN DUTHOIT
Unicorns ..... Mlles. BIANCHI, BERTHEAS, MONS, DELINI, JAVILLARD, MALLARTE, DELAUBIER, FORET, BRENOT, PERNEL, CEREZ

AFTER many postponements *La Dame à la Licorne*, which had already been staged in Munich, New York and in South America, was finally presented at the Paris Opéra. One remembers that this work should have been originally presented in October 1957 for the inauguration of the Théâtre du Château de Versailles at a gala performance which was perpetually delayed because of the strikes. Probably this ballet would have been much more successful had it been presented on the smaller stage for which it was intended because the changing of the proportions have only served to accentuate its faults. This inconsequential trifle suffers by inevitable comparison with two earlier works: the very original *Phèdre* which is also by Cocteau, and with the Medieval *Chevalier et la Damoiselle* (Gaubert/Lifar/Cassandre), whose music and choreographic themes are similar.

The theme which is inspired by the famous tapestry is a poetic one and it must have appealed very much to Cocteau's liking for mythological subjects. The poet wanted to evoke the legend of the White Unicorn who will eat only from the hand of a young virgin and who would rather die than be abandoned for the Knight who appears from the depth of the forest. Despite certain reservations, this subject of Cocteau's is an interesting one.

We see the forest composed of tall green birches, and the blue and red pavilion he has designed for the Lady who is surrounded by her attendant musicians. Cocteau's costumes, however, are uneven in quality. His happiest choice is that for the Knight, which is black and yellow, with a white make-up which reminds one of an Oriental mask. That for the Unicorn, embellished with white, is graceful, but it suffers from the design of its mask which, though certainly ingenious, lacks any expression. As to the mauve and purple costume for the Lady, it is undoubtedly too short at the front and too long at the back. While its train dangerously impedes her movements, the skirt, which is so short as to be almost non-existent, hardly suggests a pure young maiden, but rather a somewhat flamboyant courtesan. Whatever has happened to the master touch of he of whom Diaghilev once begged: "Jean, étonne moi!"?

Jacques Chailley is a well-informed musicologist and he has most skilfully arranged some charming melodies of the 15th and 16th centuries but, regrettably, he has been unable to avoid a certain slowness and repetitiveness. Heinz Rosen's choreography is sincere, though it frankly bears little relation to the score. On a psychological plane, one can hardly agree with his bold and unvirginal *variation* for the Lady, and it likewise seems improbable that the Unicorn would visualise the erotic and neo-realistic frolics he has composed for the Apparitions.

The most interesting rôle is that of the White Unicorn, and to it Liane Daydé lends a graceful charm and a youthful vivacity and precision that are quite remarkable. However, she is not helped by the fact that she is surrounded by an endless array of Unicorns in blue, yellow, pink . . . and, anyway, isn't it a Unicorn's privilege to be unique? Surely Heinz Rosen could have found a better way of employing the *corps de ballet* ! Claude Bessy was a beautiful, melancholy heroine, and suggested with great sensibility the frightened shyness of the beginning, followed by seductiveness, and finally abandon. Michel Renault was an ardent Knight. All in all, the generally attractive dancing redeemed this sometimes unsatisfactory work.

Marie-Françoise Christout.

An Experiment in Ballet Design

The Slade School, in London University, has for many years had a name for being one of the foremost schools to produce designers of ballet. This year, the Principal, Peter Snow, and his assistant, Nicholas Georgiadis, decided on the experiment of setting a ballet for the students to design and carrying it through all the usual phases that would be met with in the theatre itself.

by PETER WILLIAMS

Photographed by ROBERT BELTON

BALLET design cannot be taught. It is possible to teach the basic principles of design for other branches of the theatre, but when it comes to ballet it is only possible to inspire and guide. It was Diaghilev who changed the whole aspect of ballet design by bringing painters into the theatre rather than designers and artisans. Such was his taste and knowledge that he was even able to make stage designers of people as unlikely as Picasso, Braque and Matisse, and the latter, as we have often been told, knew little of the mysteries of stagecraft. When we hear of the number of rough designs of Picasso that Diaghilev discarded for *Pulcinella* alone, then it is possible to get some idea of his power and the respect he engendered. There is no artistic director in the world today who would dare to reject a Picasso design even if he were ever lucky or clever enough to squeeze one out of him. No, there are no Diaghilevs around these days, not even a speck on the horizon of anyone with like stature, and few designers working for ballet now get any help from the artistic directors or choreographers with whom they are working. When it is said that designers should not be interfered with and "given their heads", what it really means is that nobody has the confidence to be able to tell them what they should have done, with the result, as most of you have seen, that we are usually faced with stage spectacles of considerable mediocrity. It is therefore all the more important that the "inspiring" and "guiding" that goes on in art schools should be of the very highest quality because after students have left these portals they are unlikely to get much help from anyone else — not in ballet are they.

But of all the schools guiding and inspiring young designers, that attached to the London University and known as the Slade School is the one to have turned out the greatest number of important names in the pitiful little list of notable designers working for British ballet. Rex Whistler, Oliver Messel, James Bailey, Richard Beer, Nicholas Georgiadis and Yolande Sonnabend are but a few that immediately come to mind. For a great number of years dating back to well before World War II, it was Vladimir Polunin who was the presiding genius there. Later came Robert Medley, and he was succeeded by Peter Snow, who is now assisted by an ex-student who has made a considerable mark on British ballet design, Nicholas Georgiadis. It was the two latter who hit on the idea of inviting me to go and criticise the ballet design that is being turned out at the Slade at the present time.

For our purpose we chose a specific ballet for the students to work on. The original intention had been to give them Stravinsky's *Orpheus,* but the difficulty of getting a record of this music in England ruled that out. Instead we decided upon Stravinsky's *Apollon Musagète*. It was an essential part of the exercise that the students should work from the music and that they should soak themselves in the score because it is the form and shape of the music which eventually dictates the form and shape of the designing. A designer who creates designs without having heard the score often becomes remote from the holy trinity which ballet should be. Either of these Stravinsky scores was suitable because both were essentially modern yet at the same time classical and this gave the designers more scope — they could either treat the subject in a classical way or they could give it a modern twist.

The main purpose of the exercise was for the students to work as near to theatrical conditions as is possible away from the theatre. To achieve this end they were given the record of *Apollon Musagète,* the cast, the story and Balanchine's notes for his original production as they appeared in his book, *Great Ballets*. The story of the birth of Apollo, his presentation to each of the Muses — Terpsichore, Polyhmnia and Calliope — with symbols appropriate to their arts, and his final ascent to father Zeus in Parnassus, is not complicated and can be interpreted in many ways. It gives scope, particularly with the costumes for the three Muses, for symbolism in colour and form. I asked for costumes for Apollo, Leto his mother, two Handmaidens and for the three Muses. The preliminary sketches for these and also for the setting I came to see and criticise after ten days. At this point I also asked them to give me rough

GETTING DOWN TO IT : A part of the stage design section in the Slade School with the students working on their models for Apollon Musagète. *In the background, Georgiadis is seen leaning over a student's work, behind him is Peter Snow, and seated between them is Pauline Whitehouse, whose designs appear on the next page.*

PAULINE WHITEHOUSE DESIGNS APOLLON : *Above is the model for the setting as Pauline Whitehouse sees it. In the original design the rostrum and the two flats were more indeterminate than here and would, in practice, be seen behind a gauze. The wings and the two centre flats are of heavy gauze mounted on frames and painted. Below are the costumes for the two Handmaidens in copper and gold while the Muses, in the bottom picture, are in mauve or green with black and gold.*

ground plans and possible suggestions for a lighting plot as well as producing patterns of the materials to be used for the costumes. At later visits they had produced more finished costume designs and also built models of their sets.

My original contention that ballet design cannot be taught was born out by the approach of both Peter Snow and Nicholas Georgiadis to the work of the students. Both of them are painters and both have had considerable experience of working in the theatre, both of them have designed for the Royal Ballet. This is the ideal combination because the fact that they are painters gives them the imagination to inspire and their practical experience is enough to stop those wild flights of impractical fancy which most theatre design students indulge in. What impressed me most was that the students were encouraged to think and work on individual lines. Their particular qualities were built up and developed rather than, as so often happens in art schools purporting to teach design, being turned into the same mould which is the particular style or preference of the teacher in question. So often have I seen the work of students that was but a dim carbon copy of their teacher's work and usually completely unrealisable. At the Slade there was a great cross-section of artistic approach to design. For instance some were painters pure and simple, some were decorators, some were sculptors and each of these facets was encouraged. I cannot recall any designs I saw that could have been labelled either "Snow" or "Georgiadis" and I think this is greatly to the credit of both teachers and to the system at the Slade.

After a rather slow beginning when only a few had any concrete idea of what they saw in *Apollon Musagète,* they gradually worked up over the weeks to quite a frenzy of designing and model-making. The most encouraging feature of the whole exercise being the enormous strides that each of the students made between my visits.

In this and the next number I shall attempt to give my impressions of the best work I saw and I am starting off with the work of Pauline Whitehouse and Ian Spurling, not necessarily because they were the best but because they were the most completed at the time of going to press.

Pauline Whitehouse, whose work you see on the left, achieved an abstract setting which seemed to me to create an environment of ancient mystery. Her main colour was a parchment yellow with lines of brown and orange. It was an interesting set in many ways because not only did it have all that the choreography and plot required but it showed great possibilities for imaginative lighting. Against this, her costumes were of a rather sombre richness — dark blues, greens, mauves and so on. These costumes had a nice clean line and an interesting silhouette. Overall there was extreme elegance. Of all the students I saw, Pauline Whitehouse understood the most about lighting.

On the opposite page is Ian Spurling's vision of *Apollon.* As can be seen from his model, he has an interesting idea of form and texture. His colour sense was, I thought, rather too heavy and not very imaginative with a tendency to use too much of that light-absorbing colour — dark blue. As soon as he develops his colour sense he should be a designer of importance because he has many other remarkable qualities. He seems very aware of the human body and its limitations with regard to the dance. He has a sense of fantasy and an understanding of clarity of line. I was impressed with his

IAN SPURLING DESIGNS APOLLON : *Above is the model for the setting which has a weathered green sky while the wings and ground row are in black, blue and green. On the left is the design for Apollo. Below, left, are designs for Muses, Handmaidens and various headdress details. Below, right, is the design for Leto, mother of Apollo,*

idea of Leto (design at the bottom far right) as the mother figure being a part of the earth. For the opening moments of the ballet she stands on the rostrum, back centre in his model, and becomes completely integrated in the scenery.

Both these designers impressed me with the thought they had given to the requirements of the ballet and to the choreographic plan. Next month I shall discuss more of the designs by the Slade students.

(to be continued)

ACCENT ON THE MALE: 9 (part 2) Michael Somes

Danseur Noble

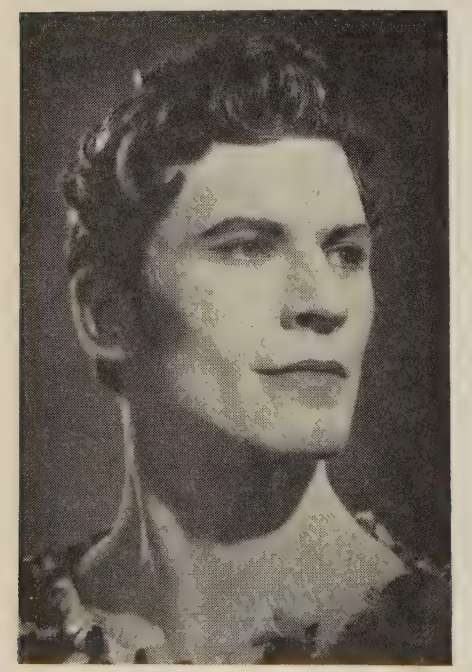
by JOHN PERCIVAL

FREDERICK ASHTON first brought Michael Somes to prominence in 1937 when he created *Les Patineurs* and *A Wedding Bouquet,* by giving the young dancer the chance in each of these ballets to show off his spectacularly soaring leap. The height of Somes's jump, the poise of his body in the air and the lightness of his landing have always been remarkable, and it was thus as a solo dancer that he first began to make his reputation. Last month I concentrated on his qualities as a partner for Fonteyn, since it is in this capacity that he has largely won his international fame, but now I want to stress some of the other and no less important aspects of his work.

The classic dance is disconcertingly frank in revealing a great deal about a dancer's nature. In the case of Somes, it shows a personality which is quiet but forceful and essentially manly. It is the innate authority derived from this which enables Somes to dominate the stage and command attention without any tricks or mannerisms.

Somes's dancing is free of all affectation. He has acquired, despite some difficult patches after his return from war service, a strong all-round technique which is his servant, not his master. He is not a virtuoso, and there are several dancers who could take the prizes from him in a dance-step competition, but this does not make them better dancers. Where Somes excels is in projecting the well-defined shape, pattern and content of the dance as a whole. His solo in the first scene of *Daphnis and Chloë* is a case in point. Exquisitely phrased to the music, each section is given the right emphasis and each step is executed with a clean finish which makes the outline of the dance clear-cut and distinct; yet the principal impression is, rightly, of the gentle pride and virile grace of the young goatherd dancing to win a kiss from Chloë. Somes makes this dance look so relaxed and easy that it needed the sight of a very able young dancer tackling the rôle with only limited success to prove how difficult it really is.

IN BIRTHDAY OFFERING.
Photo : Angus McBean.



Because of the way he dances, one tends to take Somes's technique for granted. It is worth putting on record, however, that he was the first dancer in the Royal Ballet to perform, on the Covent Garden stage, two successive *doubles tours en l'air* with no pause for preparation — the extremely effective trick which Blair (and only Blair) now includes regularly in the 3rd act *pas de deux* in *Swan Lake.* I have seen Somes do this on separate occasions in both the variation and coda of that *pas de deux,* although he never incorporated it regularly in the version he dances. I mention it here partly because people sometimes overlook or underrate Somes's technical ability and partly because it is characteristic of his willingness to experiment and develop his performances.

His constant desire for improvement has led Somes to his present position. During the war he not only lost four years of what should have been one of the formative periods of his career, but also suffered serious injury in the forces. He came back to ballet at a time when standards of male dancing were low, but has never shown any inclination to be content with the second best. In consequence, he has been the natural leader of the steady rise in the level of performance of our male dancers.

The quality of his leadership was never better demonstrated than in *Birthday Offering.* Leaping and turning in the centre of the stage, Somes had the most spectacular part in the brilliant mazurka for the male dancers, but both during the dance and in the curtain calls the relationship between him and the other six men was like that of a captain and his team rather than of a star and his supporting cast.

Somes has developed his power of expression and grasp of character just as much as the other sides of his dancing, and has widened his range remarkably. In Fokine's ballets, for instance, it is a far cry from the young Somes, sensitive and poetic as Eusebius or Pierrot in *Le Carnaval,* and gifted with an unusually appropriate combination of strength and grace in *Les Sylphides,* to the mature Somes who triumphs as Ivan Tsarevitch in *The Firebird.* Without a performance of authority in this part, the ballet falls to pieces: the Firebird's own appearances are comparatively fleeting, and her disappearance from the scene before the finale could make this an anti-climax. The dignity, nobility, humour and tenderness which Somes gives the Tsarevitch provide a keystone to hold the ballet together.

Every medal has its reverse side. Somes would doubtless now be less well suited to *Les Sylphides,* and I believe it is at his own wish that he no longer dances in this ballet — a decision which would be typical of his very real humility and ability for self-criticism.

There could hardly be a greater contrast between two dancers than between Helpmann and Somes, yet Somes took over the parts Helpmann had made for himself in *Hamlet* and *Miracle in the Gorbals* and revealed new facets of his ability. To my mind, in fact, he improved on their creator, especially by the rare sense of goodness he conveyed as the Stranger. Although not noted as a character dancer, he appeared also in four of the five ballets Massine mounted for the company, being at his best as the Cossack Chief in *La Boutique Fantasque.* The Miller in *The Three Cornered Hat* suited him less well; his natural fluency deprived the steps of some of the bite they need.

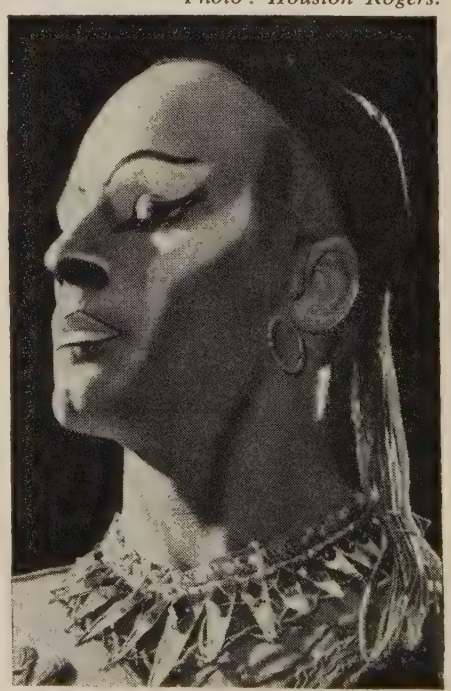
He has a nice touch for comedy. Nowadays we see this only in passing, as when the Tsarevitch tantalises Kostchei with the egg, or Palemon plays with Ondine, but memories of him as the dashingly bearded Captain Bay Vavaseur in *Les Sirènes* or in small parts in *Façade* and *The Prospect Before Us* make me wish that he would one day tackle a really funny rôle.

Somes is obviously well suited to play the heroes of the nineteenth century romantic ballets. His stagecraft and presence combine with his splendid dancing and outstanding gifts as a partner to give the rôles their fullest impact.

It is largely in these parts that Somes has gradually acquired his present natural style of acting. His strength as Albrecht, for instance, in the early days lay not in particularly expressive mime or subtle acting but in his grasp of a style in keeping with the period of the ballet's creation. Nowadays Somes, with Fonteyn and Leslie Edwards, has developed a non-realistic but entirely natural form of expression which is so apt and cogent that one almost has the impression of overhearing the conversation of Giselle, Albrecht and Hilarion. The sense of style remains, but the detail has been added.

Somes's greatest merit in these rôles, however, is that he restores to the title of

AS THE MIRACULOUS MANDARIN.
Photo : Houston Rogers.



AS ISKENDER in La Péri. *Photo : Mike Davis.*

AS IVAN TSAREVITCH in The Firebird. *Photo : John Hart.*

danseur noble its full meaning. In *Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty* or *Giselle* he conveys a magnanimity and moral grandeur which enrich the ballets — in a word, he dances them nobly.

The same kind of splendour shone through his performance in *Ballet Imperial,* and I should dearly like to see Balanchine create a ballet specially for him.

Above all, however, Somes is seen at his best as an interpreter of Ashton's choreography. Since 1937 he has appeared in all but a handful of Ashton's new works, dancing the leading male rôle in most of them. Ashton has devised for Somes parts which, at every stage of his career, have shown his gifts to best advantage. In return, Ashton has benefited from the opportunity to realise his choreographic ideas through the medium of an artist of unusual intelligence and understanding.

Of the early Ashton creations for Somes, all of which seem to have disappeared from the repertory, four have left particularly abiding memories. His gaiety as Guy, the "unknown" guest in *A Wedding Bouquet,* soaring through the festivities with an air of happy detachment; his youthful ardour in *Horoscope*; the touching delicacy and restraint of his duet with Pamela May in *The Wanderer*; and the tortured desperation of his Child of Light in *Dante Sonata,* a rôle he danced with such a conviction of sheer goodness and such burning sincerity that the scene of his crucifixion could give no offence.

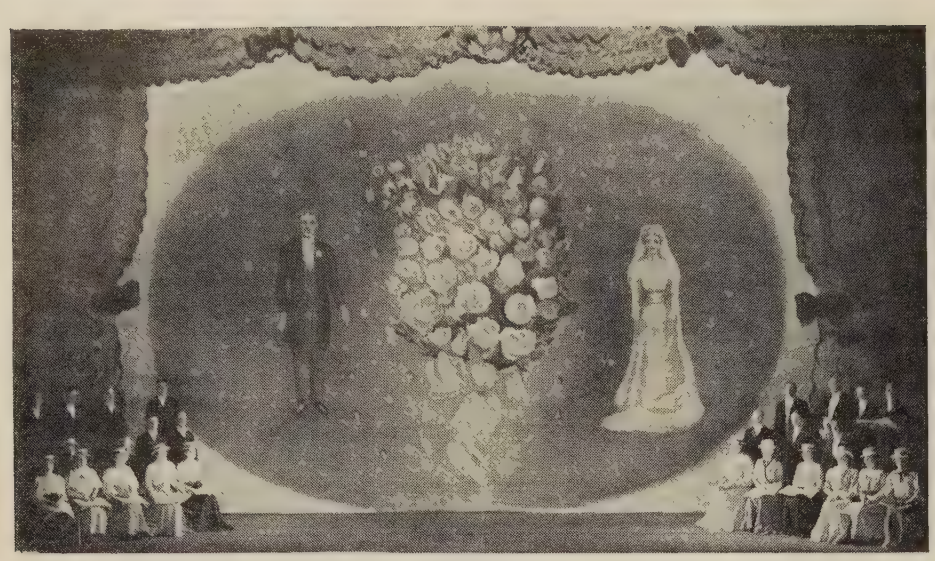
In 1946 came *Symphonic Variations,* the most beautiful example of sustained classic dancing in the Royal Ballet's repertory and the most perfect of Ashton's creations. It is also something more. Ashton described it recently as "a statement, really, of my balletic credo", and although it has no plot or story it is full of human feeling. Somes not only dances the central male rôle with rare beauty of line and an absolute and sensitive fidelity to the music, but also proves himself, as in so many other rôles, the perfect instrument for the choreographer's purpose. His masculine strength, his protectiveness and authority, his tenderness, his gravity and joyousness and nobility all add richness to the ballet's texture.

In the longer ballets, Somes's mature artistry has served Ashton by adding warmth and life to the heroes. I enjoy especially his prince in *Cinderella,* so good-humoured and courteous, even to the ill-mannered Ugly Sisters, and his Palemon in *Ondine,* whom he makes a very human figure of varied moods: dark with a sudden anger when Berta refuses his proffered gift, very playful and affectionate with Ondine, and full of remorse when he sees Ondine again after his second marriage.

Of Somes's many other rôles in Ashton's post-war ballets, all of which he has danced with distinction, I want to single out two for special mention. First Daphnis, because Somes sustains throughout this part the qualities I have already described in connection with his solo in the first scene, and because it is the rôle in which his lyrical strength and quiet ardour are seen more fully extended than in any other. Then Iskender in *La Péri,* since despite the fact that in the revised version he has not one passage of what would be generally recognised as solo dancing, he yet creates a commanding character entirely by the skills he has acquired as a dancer, thus demonstrating again how much more there is to dancing than the performing of steps.

Of course Somes's work for the Royal Ballet includes more than his appearances on stage. He has created one ballet, *Summer Interlude,* which was warmly received and displayed happily the youthful talents of Fifield, Patricia Miller, Blair and Trecu, but Somes himself was the ballet's sternest critic and it is unlikely to have a successor. He teaches, too, and although his present work leaves little time for this, he has both the ability and the desire to pass on what he has learned from his own teachers and from his long experience. A less obvious but no less valuable service to the company is the example of quiet dignity he sets off-stage as well as on.

Somes has deserved, and continues to deserve, the esteem he now enjoys as the leading male dancer of our national ballet. For our greatest ballerina he has been a worthy partner. For our most distinguished choreographer he has been an instrument of rich and faithful expression for every conception. And for the company as a whole he has been a loyal servant and true leader.



DROP CURTAIN : The deceptively respectable bridal couple depicted on Lord Berners' front-cloth. *Photo : Felix Fonteyn.*

Ballet Perspectives: 10

A Wedding Bouquet

by CLIVE BARNES

THERE was never a ballet quite like *A Wedding Bouquet* — and probably there never will be. It was a product of one of the great vintage years of British ballet, 1937. That year saw the production of *Les Patineurs,* de Valois's *Checkmate,* Tudor's *Dark Elegies* and Howard's *Death and the Maiden.* It was a wonderfully productive period in which the initiative in modern ballet was passing from the post-Diaghilev Ballets Russes into the lusty infant hands of British ballet. By 1937 the hand-over was already in full swing, yet it would be difficult to think of anything more symbolic of this process than the production of *A Wedding Bouquet* in that part of darkest Finsbury, which historians of the Sadler's Wells Theatre customarily call Islington.

For here was a ballet on Diaghilev lines, a fine collaborative venture that might even have shocked the shocking Cocteau, a ballet with *chic,* a ballet with names, a ballet that could make its appeal equally to the yellow-paged gossip writers, the sepia-toned and glossy socialite columns, and even the chaste paragraphs of the higher-browed weeklies and quarterlies. When Gertrude Stein — with her shy effusiveness in her joy at being liked — stood taking her calls that April night at the Wells, some kind of a landmark was passed in British ballet. Yet *A Wedding Bouquet* only started to start with Gertrude Stein — it had *really* started with Berners.

CHARMING ! CHARMING ! CHARMING ! : The Bride (Margaret Dale) and the Groom (Robert Helpmann) with admiring guests. *Photo : Felix Fonteyn.*

Lord Berners (1883-1950) was a man brilliantly gifted in many directions — perhaps too brilliant in too many directions. After achieving some distinction in the diplomatic service, the rest of his life was spent in composing, painting and writing novels, autobiographies and other books. It was perhaps this element of dilettantism that attracted him to ballet; it was certainly in ballet that he achieved his most considerable work. Berners was a friend of the American writer Gertrude Stein, and had for many years admired her curious, transparently opaque prose style with its penetrating whimsy and repetitiously vague exactitude. When Berners first came across Gertrude Stein's play, published in 1931, called *They Must. Be wedded. To their wife,* his original idea was to use part of it as text for some kind of opera, or rather more likely, an oratorio. Eventually as the idea crystallised in his mind, he began to see it in terms of ballet, a medium in which he had already had some success. It was natural that he should turn to his friend Frederick Ashton to be its choreographer.

Ashton had first met Berners in 1932, when Ashton had produced his Degas ballet *Foyer de Danse* for Marie Rambert's Ballet Club at the Mercury Theatre. For this work, a charming evocation of the Degas period, parts of which are still preserved among the Rambert films, Ashton had used Berners' score for *Luna Park,* a fantasy ballet, strangely enough about showbooth freaks, produced in a 1930 Cochran revue, with décor by Bérard. After this meeting Ashton sometimes stayed with Berners at his home in Berkshire, and it was there that the collaborators, together with Constant Lambert, worked out the scenario for *A Wedding Bouquet.*

The idea of a Gertrude Stein ballet was particularly attractive to Ashton, partly because, like Berners, and for that matter Lambert, he had an instinctive sympathy for her inconsequential wit, madness and insight, but also because in 1933 Ashton had gone to New York to produce and choreograph the Virgil Thomson/Gertrude Stein opera-ballet *Four Saints in Three Acts,* and there enjoyed his very first taste of international success. Stein and Ashton had got on very well together, and when Berners went to France to suggest the idea of the new ballet to Gertrude Stein, who was living in Bilignin, she liked the whole project and gave her permission for it to proceed.

The collaborators made very considerable modifications to the original text — which was, in any case, only based on the beginning of the play — and introduced a little Mexican terrier Pépé, inspired by Gertrude Stein's own pet dog. Lambert suggested putting a brief descriptive phrase under the name of each of the characters in the prologue, a device which later delighted Stein, and the original title of the play was changed, of course, to *A Wedding Bouquet,* because, as Stein put it in *Everybody's Autobiography,* the original name was "too long for advertising".

Ashton started seriously rehearsing *A Wedding Bouquet* immediately after the première of *Les Patineurs,* in February 1937. Rehearsals went easily, and Gertrude Stein, accompanied by her secretary-companion Alice B. Toklas, came to England for the first performance, arriving in time to see the dress rehearsal. She adored the ballet and told Ashton that it was "absolutely right, and that he had got the exact feeling of the characters as she had written them". The words were originally spoken by a chorus in evening dress, and

BITTERNESS IS ENTERTAINED BY ALL: (Left) Helpmann, as the Bridegroom, supports the swooning Bride, Margaret Dale, when some facts about the Bridegroom's past are revealed. (Right) Thérèse (Julia Farron), looking disconsolate, although faintly neat, and Violet (Gerd Larsen) being just delightful or not, as it happened. Photos: Felix Fonteyn.

Ashton has told me that "her one regret was that the words could not be heard more clearly". The first night was on April 27 — with Stein in triumphant attendance, loving every minute of "being a lion" — and the cast included Robert Helpmann, Mary Honer, Margot Fonteyn, June Brae, Michael Somes, Harold Turner, William Chappell, Pamela May, Elizabeth Miller, Claude Newman, Leslie Edwards, Julia Farron and Ninette de Valois. It was Dame Ninette's last rôle, and Michael Somes and Julia Farron's first.

The ballet was revived at Covent Garden on February 17, 1949, the cast including Robert Helpmann, Margaret Dale, Moira Shearer, June Brae, Michael Somes, Harold Turner, Richard Ellis, Gerd Larsen, Julia Farron, Ray Powell, Leslie Edwards, Annette Page and Palma Nye. On May 15, 1950, the ballet was selected to form the centre-piece of a Gala Performance at Sadler's Wells supposedly celebrating the 21st Anniversary of the Company, although owing to an unfortunate mathematical mistake it was in fact a year premature! The cast on that almost historic occasion included Robert Helpmann, Mary Honer, Margot Fonteyn, June Brae, Michael Somes, Harold Turner, Richard Ellis, Pamela May, Julia Farron, Claude Newman, Leslie Edwards, Margaret Dale and Ninette de Valois. Frequently the chorus was replaced by an Orator — either Constant Lambert or Robert Irving.

In *Everybody's Autobiography* Gertrude Stein made a typical comment on the first performance: "English dancers, when they dance, dance with freshness and agility and they know what drama is, it all went so very well, each time a musician does something with the words it makes it do what they never did do; this time it made them do as if the last word had heard the next word and the next word had heard not the last word but the next word. After all, why not." Well, why not, indeed; why not? And between the last word and the next word and the word before the next and after the last there came a sad, funny ballet, inconsiderately amusing and yet — in some unfathomable way — immeasurably touching. For some people, not perhaps what E. E. Cummings called "mostpeople", *A Wedding Bouquet* is more moving than *Giselle* and funnier than anything they care to name. But it is "mostpeople" who move box offices, and *A Wedding Bouquet* hasn't been produced for the greater part of a decade.

Dancers are like little boys in that they should be seen and not heard, and speech in ballet is usually rightly frowned upon. However, one should only apply doctrinaire principles to disqualify the third-rate, and while some high-minded prophets have found *A Wedding Bouquet* retrogressive and decadent, in so doing they have missed out on a lot of fun. The words of *A Wedding Bouquet* in any case do not provide a narrative line — it is certainly no recognisable sort of play — but rather they join together with the music to provide an atmospheric and rhythmic background. They are quaint and funny in themselves, yet the choreography no more depends on them than they depend on the choreography, or both depend on the music and décor. The whole thing adds up to a statement — a peculiarly direct statement — of time, place and person, and the statement arrives in four parts but one parcel.

The ballet is set during Edwardian times in a very provincial part of, I suppose, France. A wedding is taking place, and the bustling preparations are supervised by a formidable maid-servant, Webster (*"Webster was a name that was spoken"*). Guests arrive: *"These are the names that have been chosen — Josephine, Ernest and Thérèse, Julia, Guy, Paul and John."* The chorus, or commentator, vaguely announced them as they enter: Josephine (*"She may be wearing a gown newly washed and pressed"*), Paul (*"Pleasant, vivacious and quarrelsome"*), John (*"An elder brother who regrets the illness of his father"*), Violet (*"She may be delightful or not, as it happens"*), Ernest (*"May be a victim of himself"*), and Thérèse (*"Will be faintly neat"*). Ernest looks as though he is going to be a victim of rather more than himself as he is eagerly chased by Violet (*"Violet, will you ask him to marry you?"*), but Ernest periodically escapes. Violet in despair looks disconsolate (*"Thérèse, I am older than a boat, and there can be no folly in owning it!"*).

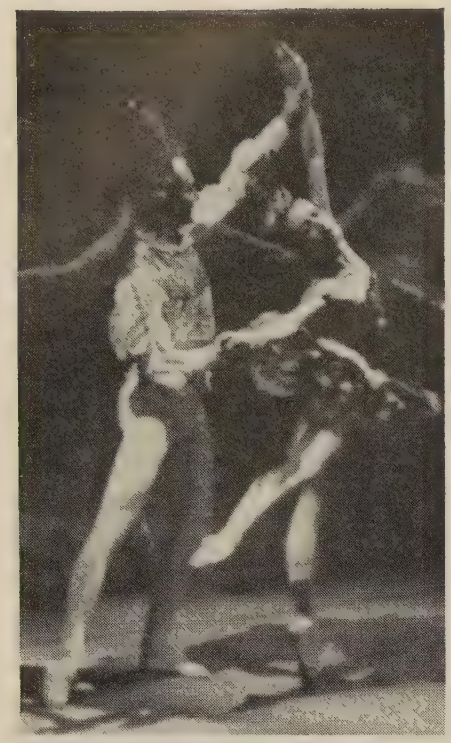
Poor, mad Julia (*"Is known as forlorn"*) enters as nutty and as sweet as a fruit cake, her long hair pouring over her face looking genuinely, ludicrously tragic. She causes the Bridegroom — surely her former lover, the cause of her indisposition — a certain well-founded embarrassment. (*"They all speak as if they expected him not to be charming"*). With Julia is her little Mexican dog Pépé (*"Little dogs resemble little girls"*). Other guests arrive, Arthur (*"Very well I thank you"*) and Guy (*"Unknown"*) and four unnamed ladies (*"They incline to oblige one only when they stare"*). They are beginning to have quite a lot to stare at, for the wedding is getting subtly and quietly out of hand.

The ceremony takes place off-stage, and the company reassemble to be joined by the Groom and his new Bride (*"Charming! Charming! Charming!"*). Webster takes a photograph of the happy group. For a time everything *"is going on nicely, nicely"*, but the nastiness soon reasserts itself. Julia throws herself around the Bridegroom, and resolutely refuses to be removed. His wan smile holds more than a hint of anxiety and social embarrassment, while Pépé's efforts to distract the attention of the Bride are not

Continued on page 34

Danilova as choreographer tops Met. Opera Ballet

by ARTHUR TODD



LA GIOCONDA: *Lupe Serrano and Scott Douglas in Danilova's successful* Dance of the Hours.
Photo: Louis Mélancon.

A NEW approach to the ballet programme has been inaugurated by the Metropolitan Opera for the 1958-1959 season that was mapped out by general manager Rudolf Bing, assistant manager John Gutman and Antony Tudor, director of the Metropolitan Opera Ballet. This has been to engage specific choreographers for certain operas and this has included the choice of Alexandra Danilova for *La Gioconda,* Matt Mattox for *Aida,* John Butler for *Die Fledermaus* and Yurek Lazowski for *Boris Goudonov,* with former choreographer Zachary Solov's dances for other operas restaged under the supervision of ballet mistress Mattlyn Gavers.

Unquestionably, the greatest success of this season has been Alexandra Danilova's choreography for *La Gioconda.* Up to now, *Dance of the Hours* has been an opera ballet that choreographers, dancers and audiences have avoided like a plague. Now, however, Danilova has changed all this and has transformed this old war-horse of a ballet into something fresh, vital, new and exciting.

For inspiration Danilova turned to Shelley's "Hymn of Apollo" to find a fresh meaning for this old-fashioned music. What she created is both classical and romantic. Rather than use the tiresome four groups of hours in various colours, she begins and ends the ballet with day, with *premier danseur* Scott Douglas, recently of American Ballet Theatre, dancing this rôle. Lupe Serrano, the *premiere danseuse,* also recently of American Ballet Theatre, has the rôle of night, coming and going as the mysterious wooer of the light hours. Scott Douglas, who is one of the two great American *premier danseurs* of his generation, has never been used so well by a choreographer up to now, nor has he danced so well in New York before this. Similarly, the brilliant and flashing Lupe Serrano has been used knowingly and superbly by this gifted and understanding choreographer. The *corps,* likewise, dance with elegance and style. When viewed, this ballet stopped the performance, which is indeed a rare event when one considers that it was primarily an opera audience that was present. Perhaps, however, they, too, realised that Alexandra Danilova's was the only noteworthy new ballet contribution at the Metropolitan Opera this season.

John Butler, who choreographed *Aida,* heretofore had danced in *Oklahoma,* was for a short time in Martha Graham's Company before he went on to specialise in staging dance for television, the New York City Opera and one ballet. *The Unicorn, the Gorgan and the Manticore,* for the New York City Ballet. Being primarily of a modern frame of mind, he completely missed the elegance and style that is so necessary to *Die Fledermaus.* Johann Strauss's *Tales from the Vienna Woods* seems to cry out for grace, rhythm and floating waltzers, but what Butler devised for the two soloists and the *corps* was chiefly a stop-and-go kind of movement that had no flow. Oddly enough, this choreographer chose Jacques d'Amboise of the New York City Ballet and he was made guest *premier danseur* for this rôle only for the initial performances. Later, when Scott Douglas partnered Lupe Serrano, they both did valiantly with what material they had at hand. However, if memory serves, former choreographer Zachary Solov was far more successful in capturing the essence and spirit of the music and the style of the period and the operetta.

Matt Mattox, a jazz dancer and a Broadway choreographer, was the choice to choreograph *Aida,* and in the triumphal march scene his dance designs got so elaborate and pretentious that they were reminiscent of a scene from a Cecil B. de Mille biblical epic. There was much mass movement to little avail and Edith Jerell and Thomas Andrew were used in a very acrobatic manner. So, too, was Donald Martin in the slave's dance before Amneris in the preceding act. Again, one must add that this choreography has been solved more brilliantly and creatively by Zachary Solov in America and by the Covent Garden Opera House in London.

What is exciting and encouraging about dance in general at the Met. this season is the general excellence of the dancers themselves. They are a fine looking company, are technically most proficient and are developing a distinctive style of their own. The *Corps de Ballet* this season includes:

Suzanne Ames, Margaret Black, Edith Jerell, Audrey Keane, Nancy King, Lolita San Miguel, Louellen Sibley, Thomas Andrew, Bruce Marks, Donald Martin.

AIDA: *Thomas Andrew and Edith Jerell in the triumphal scene with Matt Mattox choreography.*

DIE FLEDERMAUS: *Lupe Serrano and Jacques d'Amboise in the ballet choreographed by John Butler.* *Photos: Louis Melancon.*

LA BELLE AU BOA : *Tessa Beaumont with Maurice Béjart and Dick Sanders in Béjart's burlesque of the "Rose Adagio". Both pictures are from Ciné Ballets de Paris.* *Photos : Celia Films*

CHAPEAUX : *Michéle Seigneuret and Béjart in a revue-style ballet.*

Ballet films or filmed ballet ?

by CLIVE BARNES

WHEN is a ballet film not a ballet film? When it is made by sticking a camera up in front of a stage production and turning whatever it was that finally replaced the handle. The true ballet film — when, and if, it arrives — will bear no closer relationship to theatrical dancing than does an ordinary narrative film to the art of the dramatic theatre. Between the proscenium arch and the studio floor there exists an unbridgeable gap; the techniques employed, the materials used, even the emotions aroused are, and must be, fundamentally different. Imagine a play filmed in the theatre: the result would certainly provide a record of the performance, it would have some intrinsic value of its own, yet the special qualities that gave it its individual validity as a work of art would of necessity have been largely lost, nor would these qualities have been replaced by those others which are peculiar to the art of the cinema. So it is with ballet.

I love the ballet, I love the cinema, and both loves combine to make me loathe the all too customary clumsy fumblings attendant upon their unhappy attempts at union. Consequently it was in no very cheerful mood that I went to the French Institute on February 3 to see a film calling itself *Ciné-Ballets de Paris,* directed by Louis Cuny. However, I was rather more reassured when Cuny himself got up and spoke some sound sense about the making of ballet films, even though I doubted whether his deeds would live up to his fine words. In the event, they didn't! Nevertheless. the film seemed to me to be one of very considerable interest. and probably marks a small-paced but definite step in a direction comfortingly right of centre.

Cuny, of course, knows all the questions and answers about dance films. But theories are not everything; those two scintillating fuddy-duddies who made *The Red Shoes* knew so much that they were only held back from producing a masterpiece by their own exquisitely impeccable bad taste, and Gene Kelly had a wrinkle or two up his sleeve when he handed out that disastrous *Invitation to the Dance.* Still, while you can make a bad film with good theories, you can never make a good film with bad, and although Cuny, rather surprisingly after all his sales-spiel, was not nearly so adventurous as either Kelly or Powell and Pressburger in *The Red Shoes,* he was at pains to maintain a whole-heartedly cinematic approach to his subject, and keep at bay the spectre of the *ballet-manqué.*

The film is cast in the form of an introduction and six short ballets, all linked together by a fantasy device of associative ideas that is both agreeable and effective — for example, a ball played with by dancers in a classroom becomes transformed through a "dissolve" into a beach-ball, which leads naturally into the first ballet, *Play Time.* The Introduction itself, photographed like the rest in the most bewitchingly lustrous Eastmancolor, is given over to dancers in class, and in many ways shows Cuny at his best. A subject pallid with cliché ever since Dégas. was here made remarkably vibrant, as Cuny's camera and scissors vied with one another to bring life and pattern to the characters and movements of dancers at their ritual.

The dancers themselves were drawn principally from Maurice Béjart's company, and so were all the ballets except the last. Here I think Cuny was at error, and ideally would have been better advised to have used specially devised works. Yet as the production costs of *Ciné-Ballets de Paris* must in any event have been sizeable, this might well have been more a financial limitation than an artistic slip. Cuny apparently made the best job he could from the existing material and grabbed every opportunity he could to translate the stage conventions of the works into film terms.

Most regrettably I have never seen the Béjart company on stage, and consequently am in no position to comment on how well or ill these works took to the sea change wrought by Cuny's camera. Reading between the shots, I could see quite a few moments that could have been effective in the theatre, but the effect of the film was to spotlight the actual choreography, and I suspect that the trump cards that have made Béjart famous are of a different suit. Certainly in the choreography of the four Béjart ballets shown here, or, for that matter, in the one by Dick Sanders, there was nothing to set the Seine on fire, not even its susceptibly inflammable Left Bank. It revealed little musical sense—a deficiency perhaps derived, as it were, from Petit—and a paucity of genuine invention that was only emphasised by an unfortunate habit of repetition. For instance Béjart seems to think — and he is probably right — that a ballet dancer's foot held at 90° to his ankle is a screamingly funny sight, but used as often as it is here it became more screaming than funny. A cod parody of the "Rose Adagio" was quite neatly carried off, but probably Béjart most impressed in the *musique concréte* work *Symphonie Pour Un Homme Seul.* Although, as Peter Williams once pointed out, this now has a dated air about it, it was beautifully directed by Cuny and showed the electric Michéle Seigneuret to devastating effect. In a quite different mood of witty depravity, she was also innocently delightful in revue-styled ballet called *Hats.*

The film's most ambitious section was also dance-wise its least successful. The final *Les Amoureux de la Seine,* the only *original* ciné-ballet, used a location setting *à la* Kelly. Yet despite the visual beauty. its lack of dance interest caused a fine film to sag down to an anti-climax.

ENCOUNTER WITH A FUTURE: Svetlana Beriosova, John Cranko, Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis and Mexican painter Rufino Tomayo meet at John Cranko's house. What did they discuss? Well, the new ballet based on the Antigone story in which Beriosova will star and on which the other three are collaborating. The work will be given by the Royal Ballet next Autumn. Photo: Robert Belton.

MORE AWARDS: America is a remarkable country for giving out awards. This time it is Gene Kelly, Alicia Alonso and Igot Youskevitch who were given Dance Magazine *awards for their services to the dance in 1958. The ceremony took place at the New York Athletic Club on February 13. Photo: Impact.*

curtain up!

Gilpin's new role

WHEN last summer everyone was speculating whether John Gilpin would join the Royal Ballet or form a new company, or all the things that people were saying around that time, I told you that as far as this paper was concerned he would remain the star of Festival Ballet until he chose to announce otherwise. Far from announcing otherwise, Dr. Braunsweg put out a statement on February 25 that Gilpin had signed a two-year contract with Festvial Ballet as *premier danseur* and assistant artistic director. So *that* has stopped the tongues a-wagging for some time.

Just as this announcement was being made, Festival Ballet's artistic director, Anton Dolin, contracted jaundice and was put out of action for some weeks, so Gilpin temporarily took over his position. Immediately Gilpin was faced with a number of problems concerning future tours, repertory and the engagement of new dancers. It undoubtedly placed an extra burden on his shoulders considering he dances exhausting rôles most nights and takes class and rehearses most of the day. But he is young and ought to be able to take it all in his stride and he will also be gaining most invaluable experience. There is not the slightest doubt that the time has come for young blood to take over important administrative positions and it is equally important that they should be able to feel the reins firmly in their hands while their predecessors are still in a position to guide them and pass on the experience they have gained over the years.

The Stigma fades

ONE of the interesting points about the whole Gilpin episode has been the publicity it has received in the Press. Obviously both Gilpin himself and the succession to the present Royal Ballet hierarchy are both regarded as topics of public appeal. A few days before Dr. Braunsweg's announcement, the *Sunday Times* made Michael Somes the subject of their weekly portrait gallery. "He's dreamy!", one girl was heard saying to her friend as she looked at Somes's photograph while reading the paper in a public conveyance. Then in the *Daily Express,* David Blair's first appearance in the title rôle of *Petrushka* gave Blair the rare honour of an illustration, an honour usually confined exclusively to ballerinas. All of which will have helped to remind the general public that male dancing is no longer the weak link of British ballet, and it seems that at last our men have made the grade in public estimation.

Not a dead loss after all

LAST autumn, the Edinburgh Festival Ballet came to an untimely end and it seemed that the dozen new works produced would all be lost for ever. However, the case is actually very different. The Scandinavian countries were the first in the field with revivals of ballets by local choreographers, then George Skibine mounted his *Les Facheuses Rencontres* in Paris. Last month I revealed that Andrée Howard would probably re-work her Edinburgh ballet, *La Belle Dame sans Merci,* for the Royal Ballet next autumn. In addition, although no firm announcement has been made at the time of going to press, there seems a possibility of Walter Gore's *The Night and Silence* for the summer season of Ballet Rambert at Sadler's Wells. It is hoped that the choreographer and his wife, Paula Hinton, will come to London to appear in it. Already this work has been seen on television and has been much admired. If somebody would revive Peter Wright's *The Great Peacock* then undoubtedly the most original elements of this season would have been saved.

The dancers of tomorrow

THE special performance of *Coppélia* by the Royal Ballet School is attracting a lot of interest. Such graduation performances are common in Russia, but I believe that it will be the first time that such an event has happened here although a programme of one-act ballets by members of the school was proposed in 1945. Although *Coppélia* makes an admirable choice for a start as most people knowing the ballet can have a yardstick by which to judge the qualities of the young dancers, let us hope that it will not be the invariable choice for these occasions. In time it should be possible to mount one or two works specially designed to show off the talents of the young dancers. It should never be forgotten that Fokine once created works for similar events when he was a young boy at the school of the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, and we all know what was the outcome of that.

Although the two principals dancing Swanilda and Franz in the forthcoming student production are no longer students, it will give both talented artists — Antoinette Sibley and Graham Usher — a chance to appear in rôles that they are unlikely to get for some time with the main company. Anyway, both are products of the Royal Ballet School.

Welcome return

THE student *Coppélia* also brings Peggy Van Praagh back into the Royal Ballet organisation once more. She will be responsible for the production, and few British dancers are more able, as she was one of the finest Swanildas ever to appear in a British company. Her talent for ballet production has, over the past few years, taken her to all parts of the globe to mount

works from the British repertory on foreign companies. Now she is back with the organisation I understand that she will continue in this capacity, as well as teaching. I am sure that everyone is glad that she is back with the company in which she really belongs.

Later in the year she has another engagement to undertake in America. namely teaching at the famous Jacob's Pillow summer school. Here, among other things, she will also train some American dancers specially to appear in the *corps de ballet* when the Ballet Rambert gives its season there.

An opportunity missed

AFTER the high feelings caused by an article in one of the Sunday papers about Markova's views on honours for ballerinas, the announcement that she was to appear in the BBC's programme, *Frankly Speaking,* promised some lively discussion. Disappointingly the interviewers put their most elementary questions in the most kid-gloved manner imaginable and elicited little but a brief narrative of the ballerina's career. Markova, like most artists of personality, has been the centre of controversy more than once: for leaving the struggling Vic-Wells Ballet in 1935, for instance, and for spending the war years in America. I know that Markova had good reasons for her actions and it might have made for livelier listening if she had been asked a few questions on these points and allowed to tell the whole story from *her* angle. Her answers, heard by such a vast audience, could well have put a number of facts straight in the minds of the public.

Sell-out for Ondine

SINCE Ashton's *Ondine* had its world première at Covent Garden last October, opinions have varied about its merits. Some people don't like the score, some don't like the designing, and I even heard one lady at Covent Garden complaining that there was no dancing for Fonteyn in it! On one subject, however, there can be no doubt at all; it has made a bigger impact on the public at large than any other ballet since the Bolshoi's *Romeo and Juliet.* In fact it has been easier to get seats for some performances of *West Side Story* than for any *Ondine* performance.

No less a person than Princess Margaret has been the ballet's staunchest supporter, and after seeing it for at least the third time she brought the Queen with her.

Perhaps part of the success is due to the fact that Fonteyn makes no secret of the fact that it is her favourite rôle. She chose it for the Paul Czinner film and again she has chosen it when the *Sunday Times* invited her to write about the rôle she likes the best. Really *Ondine* is Ashton's answer to all those people who have been carping for years about the fact that Fonteyn had no great created rôle in a full-length ballet.

Exhibition time

THE ballet exhibition, which I hear forms one of the attractions of this year's Danish ballet festival, will be the first exhibition of its kind ever held in Denmark. As it celebrates more than two centuries of a continuous tradition, this seems rather surprising. In England, where our tradition is a great deal shorter and infinitely more erratic, we seem to have ballet exhibitions all the time. For instance, there is to be another exhibition held at the Army & Navy Stores in London which, I understand, will be much larger and more comprehensive than the one held there last year. It is being organised by a man who has close connections with one of the companies to be illustrated, which seems a little unfortunate. However. he could always point out, if attacked on these grounds, that one of our most eminent writers on ballet has even closer connections with the school attached to another well-known company.

Another exhibition, which opens at the Victoria & Albert Museum in mid-March, is of designs and pictures by Mstislav Doboujinsky. His sets and costumes for Ballet Rambert's *Coppélia* are the only examples of his work currently to be seen in this country, though he designed the original productions of Balanchine's *Ballet Imperial* and Massine's *Mam'zelle Angot* for American companies. The chance to see his designs again will be interesting, but I seem to remember more than one previous exhibition of them in recent years. What a pity that we cannot have the opportunity to see also the work of his greater contemporaries — Bakst and Benois.

Death of a notable artist

IN the last issue, I gave you news of the serious illness of Gordon Hamilton. Unhappily, just as the magazine had been printed, he died at the American Hospital in Paris on February 14. He had two operations for cancer and it seemed as though he was well on the way to recovery when he had a sudden relapse. He will be greatly missed by his vast number of friends all over the world. He was always a popular member of the Royal Ballet in which company he gave very fine performances in character rôles. Later, when he joined Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris and Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées, he brought the same quality to everything he did and he became popular with the audiences in both France and America. Latterly he had been a ballet-master at the Vienna State Opera.

Proof of the affection in which he was held by his fellow artists came most recently. The cost of the hospital and the operations was considerably more than any dancer could be expected to pay, and for the last two months Gordon Hamilton was relieved of all financial worry owing to the goodness of his friends. Sums were sent to the hospital from America and from the Royal Ballet Benevolent Fund, and, as you possibly saw in the press, Dame Margot Fonteyn and Roland Petit sent money to help cover the hospital and funeral costs. Unfortunately there is still about £500 needed to cover expenses, and if any readers would like to help to pay off this debt they can do so by sending a cheque to the Morgan-Grenfell Bank, London, S.W.1. Make out cheques to the a/c of the American Hospital (Paris) and inform the Bank that the money is on behalf of Gordon Hamilton.

happy birthday to...

		May
Brenda Taylor	Royal Ballet I	3
Larry Boyette	American Ballet Theatre	3
Robert Barnett	New York City Ballet	6
Jacqueline Moreau	De Cuevas International Ballet	7
Wendy Barry	London's Festival Ballet	10
Donald Spottswood	De Cuevas International Ballet	24
Ruth Ann Koesun	American Theatre Ballet	15
Nicholas Beriosoff	Ballet-master in Stuttgart	16
Nancy Demmler	American Ballet Theatre	16
Margot Fonteyn	Royal Ballet I	18
Daniel Seillier	De Cuevas International Ballet	18
Peter White	London's Festival Ballet	19
Gilbert Vernon		21
Deryk Mendel	Ballet-master, Bordeaux Opera	23
Graham Usher	Royal Ballet I	23
Tatiana Riabouchinska		23
Travis Kemp	Teaching in Turkey	23
Christopher Lyall	Ballet Rambert	24
Victoria Beller	De Cuevas International Ballet	24
Ann Horn		24
Margaret Lee	Royal Ballet II	26
Cecil Bates	Teaching in Australia	26

Dancer of Today

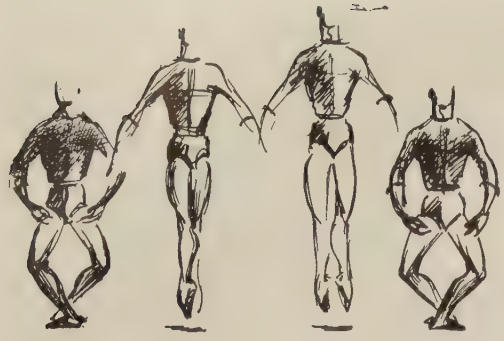
AS THE DAGO in Façade

STANLEY HOLDEN

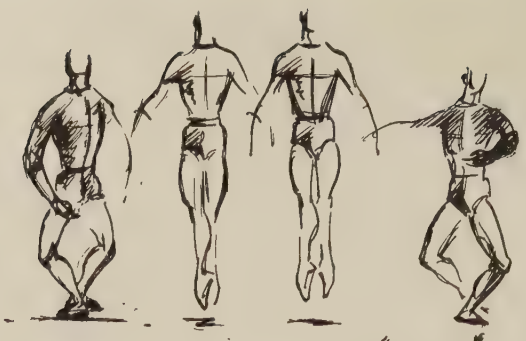
BORN in London in 1928. Started to dance at the Bush-Davies School in Romford at the age of 11. Entered the Royal Ballet School in 1944 and joined the Company later the same year. Called up in 1946, he was released in 1948 when he joined the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. After a foot injury he left in 1954 and went teaching in South Africa, returning in 1957 to rejoin the Theatre Ballet. Transferred to the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden in 1958.

Creations: Agnes in Selina; *Pierrot in* Harlequin in April; *Doctor in* The Great Detective; *Leading Cyclist in* Café des Sports. *Rôles: Puss in Boots and Ivan in* The Sleeping Beauty; *Dr. Coppélius in* Coppélia; *Hilarion in* Giselle; *Mr. O'Reilly in* The Prospect Before Us; *Man with the Rope in* The Rake's Progress; *Pantalon in* Carnaval; *Dago* in Façade; Pas de Trois *in* Les Rendezvous; *Gravedigger in* Hamlet; *Jasper in* Pineapple Poll; *Sailor in* Tritsch-Tratsch; *Tordions in* Capriol Suite; *Elderly Gentleman in* Assembly Hall; *Chief of Police, Café Proprietor and Gendarme in* Mam'zelle Angot.

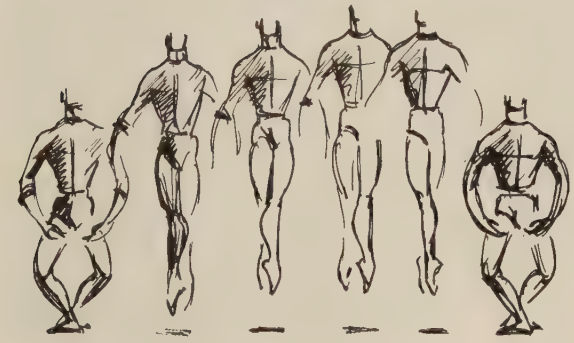
STANLEY HOLDEN is almost certainly one of the two most gifted comedians British Ballet has so far produced — the other being Robert Helpmann. Consider the hangdog air of affronted stolidity he wears as the Gendarme in *Mam'zelle Angot.* It is only a tiny part but the way he plays it makes it momentarily into a leading rôle, and he gets his laughs as surely in this as he did as Mr. O'Reilly or the Dago. Yet his range extends outside comedy, and he is a more than useful character dancer, while he has shown in parts like the Man with the Rope his natural capacity for straight drama. Since he has joined the Company at Covent Garden his talents seem to have been neglected until his great success in his old part in *Harlequin in April.* After the cheers of that first night audience they are surely unlikely to be forgotten again.



(a) Royale

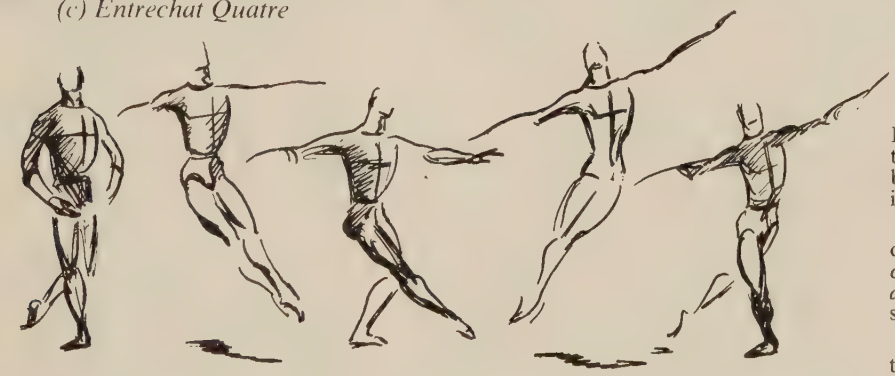


(b) Left — Entrechat Trois



(c) Entrechat Quatre

(d) Entrechat Sept de volé



(e) Brisés Volés en avant and *en arrière* (or *dessus* and *dessous*)

STEPS OF THE DANCE 38

by

BARBARA VERNON *and* JOHN GREGORY

Illustrated by EILEAN PEARCEY

CENTRE WORK: ALLEGRO cont:

BATTERIE: The beating of the legs together in the air is an ornamentation of the step that gives brilliance and enhances the *enchaînement.* There are two types of jump which may be adorned with beats, the straight upwards jump, and the travelling jump. In the vertical jump to enable the beat to be relaxed and easy it is necessary to give a strong push so that there is time in the air to make the necessary movements of the legs.

The feet push from the floor and remain stretched in the air during the beat. The power of beating lies mainly in the thighs and in the hips, not as is commonly supposed in the lower leg. There is nothing worse than seeing ankles scratched together in a beat; the actual beat is taken high on the cushion of the calf. The ankles do not meet. In descent the feet relax as the tips of the toes touch the floor, and the finish is completed in a smooth *plié* in which both heels are firmly pressed into the floor.

In all travelling beats taken from one leg it is important to bring the supporting leg (that is the leg from which the jump has been taken) up to the working leg, and not to bring the working leg down to meet the supporting leg, which would diminish the elevation and make the step look heavy and ineffective.

Beating should not be attempted before the technique of the step in its simple form has been fully mastered; in fact beating cannot be happy and painless until a certain measure of *ballon* has been acquired by the dancer. The beating must always take place at the climax of the ascent so as to give the impression of lightness and ease. The greatest care should be taken to keep the upper body and arms relaxed during the beat, and to show no reflex action.

Several *Allegro* steps already described may be executed with or without a beat. The *Assemblé, Jeté, Ballonné*, etc., have been described in the sections devoted to these steps.

ROYALE: Is the simplest of beats. From 5th position the vertical jump is taken. In the air the calves hit together before the legs change place to land again in 5th position.

ENTRECHAT TROIS: Is like a *Royale,* only after the beat, one leg is picked up to *cou de pied.* It may be executed *devant* or *derrière.* These small beats should be very sharp and crisp in execution.

ENTRECHAT QUATRE: With a vertical jump from 5th position, the legs open apart slightly to change places in the air and beat calf to calf, after which they bounce back to the original position before landing in 5th position *en plié.*

ENTRECHAT CINQ: Similar to an *Entrechat Quatre* but instead of landing in 5th position after the beating of the calves, one leg is picked up to *cou de pied.* It may be performed *devant* or *derrière.*

BRISE: *Brisés* are small beaten steps that are derived from *Assemblés.* They travel sideways or *en diagonal,* and may also be performed circularly. They may commence from 5th position, or from one leg, and may finish likewise. In every *Brisé* the weight of the body is carried forwards or backwards with the movement.

BRISE EN AVANT (dessous): Stand in 5th position *en croisé;* forward arm in 2nd position, other arm in 4th position. With *plié,* swish out back leg to the side *en l'air,* simultaneously pushing from the floor to spring towards lifted leg. In the air the front (or supporting leg) is brought up sharply to beat behind the calf of the back leg, and immediately returns to the original position to land 5th position *en plié.*

When performed from 5th position as described, the thrown leg is a quicker movement than the push from supporting leg, so that although the movement commences simultaneously, the push from the floor comes a split second after the working leg extends.

The landing in 5th position *en plié* must always be simultaneous. It is a common error to allow one leg to close lightly after the other. The same movement may be commenced and finished with the back leg in *cou de pied* position. The arms may remain in the positions described, or be reversed.

BRISE EN ARRIERE (dessous): Slightly more difficult than the *Brisé en avant* because in this step the body travels *diagonally* backwards. From *plié* in 5th position *en croisé*; forward arm in 2nd position, other arm in 4th position; swish out front leg to the side *en l'air,* simultaneously springing into the air with the back well arched. In the air the back leg (or supporting leg) is lifted to beat sharply in front of the other leg, returning immediately to the original position to land 5th position *en plié*. The arms may remain as described, or to give a more airy feeling to the step may be carried upwards, forward arm slightly above 2nd position, other arm to 3rd position, palms downwards.

BRISES VOLES: The flying *Brisé* is a continuous combination of *Brisé en avant* and *Brisé en arrière*. To enable the two steps to join without a break, the forward leg does not close in 5th position after the *Brisé en avant* but is extended forward in the air; with a push from supporting leg it is then swept back to beat with the other leg in *Brisé en arrière,* after which the back leg is left extended behind in the air. This is a very effective *diagonal* step.

ENTRECHAT SIX: Vertical jump from 5th position *en plié*. Arms in 1st position. In the air the legs change places three times, beating calf to calf, and return to earth in 5th position *en plié,* the leg which was in front finishing behind. To enable a strong beating, it is helpful in the ascent to open the legs a little sideways before commencing the beat. It is important to keep the arms and upper body well relaxed and to take the push from the floor in the thighs and loins. A strong back is essential. When taken in series the arms may assist the effortless jumping by opening and lowering sideways, like a rhythmic breathing, with each jump.

ENTRECHAT SEPT DE VOLE (sometimes called *Entrechat cinq*: The beauty of this beat comes with the flight of the body. Usually preceded by a *glissade,* or *Pas de Bourrée,* or *Failli* as a preparatory step to gain elevation. From 4th position *en croisé* the back leg is thrown to the *ecarté* position *en l'air,* as a strong push is taken from the supporting leg, which is immediately lifted to beat back, front, back, with the working leg. The landing is in 5th position *en plié*; the relationship of the legs having changed, back leg now becoming front leg. In the air the body is lifted and carried in the direction of the thrown leg; the corresponding arm reaches out in 3rd position, the head looks in the same direction. Other arm in 4th position.

SOME EXAMPLES OF BEATEN STEPS IN ENCHAINEMENT:

	Counts
(1) *Soubresaut en croisé en avant*	And 1,
Entrechat quatre	„ 2,
Echappé to 2nd position	„ 3,
Close 5th position with change of foot	„ 4.
Repeat on other side.	
(2) *Entrechat trois derrière*	„ 1,
Coupé dessous	„ 2,
Ballonné passé derrière	„ 3,
Coupé dessous	„ 1,
Assemblé croisé en avant	„ 2,
Royale	„ 3.
Repeat other side.	
(3) 2 *Changements*	„ 1,
Entrechat six	„ 2.
Repeat other side.	
(4) *Pas de Chat* (French style)	„ 1,
2 Brisés en avant	„ 2, and 3,
Pas de Chat	„ 1,
Brisé en arriere	„ 3.
Repeat same way *en diagonal.*	
(5) *Failli en avant*	„ 1,
Glissade derrière	„ 2,
Entrechat Sept de volé	„ 3.
Repeat same way *en diagonal.*	
(6) *Brisé volé en avant*	„ 1,
Brisé volé en arrière	„ 2,
Brisé volé en avant	„ 3,
Brisé volé en arrière	„ 4,
Sisol on front leg	„ 5,
Jeté derrière	„ 6.
Repeat on other side.	

The next series of "Steps of the Dance" dealing with *Grandes Sautés* and *Tours des Forces* will start in the Autumn.

Dance and Dancers . . . AT HOME

THE ROYAL BALLET (I) at Covent Garden

Swanildas Galore

RECENTLY I read an interesting and smoothly-written piece by Alexander Bland on the symbolism that is — or perhaps should be — in *Coppélia*. It was, as I remember it, supposed by him to be an allegory of time, youth and declining age. Denby, a fine American critic, sometimes too concerned with either the ultimate or the minute, also once wrote on something of the same lines about *Coppélia*. Certainly in the original 1870 production the last scene *divertissements* celebrated with fustian allegory the Peasants' Day, but nowadays this allegory only crops up in vestigial remains — like "Dawn", "Prayer" and "Work" — and the rest strikes me as having no more hidden significance than Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*.

Perhaps it is my failure to appreciate the ballet's symbolism, or perhaps it is Covent Garden's failure to convey it, but whatever the reason *Coppélia* would never win a high place on my list of favourite ballets, although I retain the fondest regard for the choreography of the first act. The Covent Garden version with its air of toyshop sophistication, and De Valois' subtle blending of the folk and classical elements in the choreographic structure, makes an undemanding evening out.

The first performance of the season on February 6 showed off the production in almost peak condition. Nadia Nerina's Swanilda proved an ingratiating piece of dancing. Both her phrasing and — for let's pinch another term from music — her "intonation" were blithely correct. Her steps were not only conceived around the music. but each one seemed to be given just that right twist or nuance that was needed to point the character or illuminate the dance pattern. Over the years Nerina has become a very careful dancer, and this care which brings her many rewards also extorts its price by robbing her performance of a certain spontaneity. Here to be sure her dancing fairly bubbles, yet they are the kind of premeditated, unsurprising bubbles you get when you open a bottle of soda-fizz or champagne. The accomplishment of her dancing was a joy in itself, and her confident expertise, unflagging and unfluffing, is now matched with a mature personality, charming and individual. You would have to go a long way indeed to find a better Swanilda than Nerina at present.

Blair matched Nerina as closely as two fine thoroughbred racehorses bearing the same handicap. They both approach their rôles in the same external way, they have the same measure and the same type of technical command; if Blair has the more arrestingly theatrical personality, Nerina's is the less self-conscious. Their double-work is now approaching the perfect, and they have established the instinctive *rapport* that is always one of the badges of a great ballet partnership.

Of the other *Coppélia* casts during the season, I caught Maryon Lane and Alexander Grant (February 7 — matinee) and Merle Park and Gary Burne (February 28 — matinee). Neither of these pairs turned out the high-spirited brilliance of Blair and Nerina—yet both duos produced some fine passages of dancing and characterisation. Lane, with her *chic* line and compact precision, showed intelligence and natural charm. She was helped a lot by Grant's ability to make a real character out of Frantz, but got less assistance from his partnering, which was well-intentioned yet not always immaculate.

Park and Burne made a highly successful début in *Coppélia* last season, and it was interesting to see how their portrayals were wearing. Park has developed over the past year, and can now show off her effortless technique with an unforced vivacity. She appears to make an unusual, yet worthwhile, attempt to carry over the characterisation of the first two Acts into the final *pas de deux,* and retains a kind of peasant ingenuousness with which she colours the classical choreography. Burne's dancing had plenty of gusto, although his interpretation still tended to crowd in rather too much fussy detail.

Each pair had their own particular Dr. Coppélius — Hart with Nerina/Blair, Leslie Edwards with Lane/Grant and Franklin White with Park/Burne. In each instance it seemed a good match, for Hart proved the most accomplished, Edwards the most intelligent, and White the most detailed. It was Edwards who seemed to show the greatest improvement on previous performances and his doddering whimsicality was here beautifully conveyed. Hart's broader portrayal hinted rather more at the rôle's menacing and even tragic overtones, although he should be careful of that tendency to caricature the part which he once overcame. White's performance had the air of being carefully thought out, but his agitated and grotesque toymaker only sprang to life spasmodically. It seems strange, incidentally, that now Stanley Holden is back with the company that he has not yet undertaken this part along with the others, as his interpretation of Dr. Cop-

pélius has generally been regarded as among the world's best.

Cast changes in the ballet have included William Wilson as a welcome leading character dancer in the first act, and Antoinette Sibley and Georgina Parkinson, making their débuts as Dawn and Prayer respectively. Sibley — who seems to have inherited Park's old position of *corps de ballerina assoluta* — looked supremely assured and gracious as Dawn, dancing with a fresh youthfulness that was like early dew on roses. Parkinson, less perfect, more sophisticated than Sibley, made a touching thing of Prayer, giving an impression of dedication that never slipped into sentimentality.

Balletic Swan-upping

A LOT of swans — all shapes and sizes — have been sailing around Covent Garden in recent weeks, during what looked like some kind of festival of balletic swan-upping. Most of them are being marked elsewhere in these pages, with only Nerina and Beriosova gliding in the direction of my pen. The performance of *Swan Lake* with Nerina and Blair which I saw was on February 12 and, although I am told that they were even better on a subsequent appearance — why is it always the night you miss that your friends tell you you should have seen? — they struck me as at least moderately fabulous on that occasion. Certainly I had never seen either of them better, even if it was the wrong night!

Nerina has greatly improved her Odette Acts, which are now shining almost whiter than white. But shining is perhaps the wrong word for dancing which is taking on a warmly opalescent glow, and there can be no doubt that Nerina is learning to use every inch of her expressive body to its fullest effect. Her tragically withdrawn Odette found its flashing counterpart in her capriciously seductive Odile, where her dancing took on the cold dazzle of the siren. Blair partnered with a Bolshoi grandeur that was only marred by an occasional but unfortunate smirk. His dancing was such as could hardly be equalled anywhere in the Western world. He never did six *pirouettes* without looking as though he could do eight, his *double tours* finished rather than stopped, and he danced with such an air of enjoyment and ease that it seemed almost superfluous to applaud. If I wanted to carp I would say that while his jumps were good he lacked *ballon*, but I don't. Like Nerina — whose corruscating series of *echappés* rounded off the *pas de deux* — the only honest sort of criticism of them is to gasp.

These two are still climbing up and up, yet Nerina, in particular, at the moment remains something of a dancer's dancer and is fast becoming a critic's pet. However, lately she has been winning her audience as well, and her "personality" is almost visibly expanding. Blair has no difficulty in reaching the public, yet I do not feel that he altogether believes in these cardboard princes, and this makes his total interpretation less effective as a whole than it is in its parts.

Swan Lake on the afternoon of February 21 was notable for excellent performances by Beriosova and Ashbridge — who, incidentally, has recently been promoted to the rank of principal dancer — but as they were reviewed a month or so ago, I will restrict myself to the outstandingly promising *pas de trois* by Antoinette Sibley, Doreen Wells and Graham Usher. These three young dancers would have been excellent in any circumstances, but for a début performance it was unreservedly remarkable. They produced a *joi de vivre* that caught at the heart, and their clean-limbed and exquisitely placed dancing looked completely spontaneous. Their performance possessed that terribly rare quality in the theatre — innocence. It was the kind of dancing that can make one fall in love with classical ballet all over again.

Blair's Petrushka

GRANT'S departure on overseas detachment to his homeland of New Zealand has left a gap at Covent Garden that no amount of platitudinising about no one being indispensable can fill. It has, however, thrown up a few interesting cast changes, two of which were on view on February 18.

Although many of my colleagues seemed to have found Blair's assumption of the title rôle in *Petrushka* surprising, I was only puzzled by his not having danced it before. For one thing it is the type of part he desperately needs to get his teeth into at this stage of his development, and his début produced an honest and painstaking attempt at a characterisation which given time could become notably successful. His dancing, with its shambling gait and string-jerked articulation, made a good impression. Less effective was his grey putty make-up (which he changed for the second performance), and so far the characterisation is little more than sketched in. However it is a sketch on the right lines, which now only needs the right colours for it to develop into a portrait.

It cannot have been much of a joke to follow Grant as the Barber in *Mam'zelle Angot*, and Peter Clegg had every ounce of my sympathy at his first attempt. From the beginning he danced excellently, and after a few performances he began to give the part something of his own. At times I think

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he was mistaken in replacing the Barber's anguish with anger, which gave the character a certain petulance that was ill-becoming, but his dancing — apart from some stubborn back bends — could hardly be faulted.

C. B.

More Odettes

UNTIL an occasion about which I shall write later, I was beginning to get worried about Anya Linden. Her Odette/Odile in *Le Lac des Cygnes* on February 27 was not particularly encouraging if you have set yourself a yardstick for ballerina accomplishment. A few years ago we should have said that her performance on this evening was one full of promise and one would have excused certain deficiencies. But the fact remains that her improvement is so slight that it still causes her to lag behind the Royal Ballet's other ballerinas — or maybe it is that they have lept ahead with such sudden and vast strides that it is difficult to keep up with them, or possibly it is that Linden looks so ravishingly beautiful that one naturally expects more of her.

She has made so many improvements, particularly in her awareness of the music and in her general interpretation, but her obvious nervousness stops her technique from being as sure as it should be. I have a feeling that the general critical attitude to her work has made these nerves more obvious, and it makes me wonder whether it would not be a good idea for her to work abroad, with foreign teachers and companies, for a short time. When she returned to the Royal Ballet she should have gained all the confidence she needs to be the artist she has all the potentialities of becoming.

On this evening she danced a second act with David Blair that was quite correct but without any impact at all. Her performance was overshadowed by a girl in the Cygnet *pas de quatre* and who also did a remarkable run-on in the coda. After fumbling to get a sixpence into the opera-glasses machine, I found that this girl was Antoinette Sibley. Now it would seem quite wrong that a girl in the *corps de ballet* should be noticeable and I am sure she was not striving in any way to be different or to outshine her surrounding swans, but her line was so exquisite and her every movement so perfectly placed that it was quite impossible to take one's eyes off her.

Again in the ballroom scene, Linden got through it with credit but was overshadowed here by her Prince Siegfried, Blair, who partnered and danced magnificently. In this same scene I noticed a piece of playing that made many of the rest of the company look pretty static, and the company recently has entered into the spirit of these ballets with far more gusto than of old. Leslie Edwards, as Von Rothbart disguised as a Baron, suddenly gave this rôle an importance I have never seen previously in any production. He has the opulent and decadent air of Central European nobility with his precise and polished gesture and his part in the three-cornered conversation between Odile and Siegfried became plausible and not the usual rather meaningless whispering that sometimes goes on. I liked the way he chatted and gossiped with Pamela May's Princess-Mother. The fact that they were both so cosy made the eventual revelation of his deception even more sinister — rather like Russian diplomacy. The rest of the performances were generally rather lacking in spirit.

The performance of *Le Lac des Cygnes* on March 2 brought back Beryl Grey as a guest artist with the company in which she grew up. She brought with her as her Prince Siegfried a young principal dancer from the Royal Swedish Ballet — Caj Selling.

Nobody could say that Grey was not impressive, but somehow she has never quite fulfilled her great promise of those early years nor does she seem to have quite acquired the stature that might have been expected from her visit to Soviet Russia. She has a beautiful liquid line which is sometimes spoilt by rather coy gestures, and these seem to be more pronounced than when she was a permanent member of the Royal Ballet. In the second act, for instance, one expected greater grandeur of movement and higher, more Russian, *arabesques*. In the third act she really came into her own as far as dancing was concerned but her acting left a good deal to be desired and she was hard and unsubtle. In both the adage, variation and coda she was completely assured and her *équilibre* gave added emphasis and beauty to many of her movements. She was, I thought, at her best in Act 4, when she was far more relaxed than in the other Acts. The fact that she was not striving for effect, because in this act there is really no effect to strive for, made her performance far more touching.

It is always a pleasure to see male guest artists with the Royal Ballet, because our males, far more than our ballerinas, need to be inspired by fresh approaches to the various classical rôles. Caj Selling is tall, fair and youthful looking. He has an agreeable and unaffected stage presence and is a competent partner, though possibly not quite experienced enough to handle somebody as tall as Grey. He seems to have definite ideas about his interpretation of the Siegfried rôle. In the first act he had all the right fear and slight arrogance when verbally chastised by his mother and I very much liked his natural attitude towards the villagers, his tutor and his friend Benno. At one moment he flirted with the little girl who causes Wolfgang's downfall — it was a most natural gesture from a young Prince on his birthday. Again in the second act his scenes with the huntsmen were well done and when he espied what he thought was a swan in the distance he drew his bow as though he really meant to shoot. He showed great tenderness towards Odette when he realised that she was really a woman. In the third act again his attitude towards the rejected Princesses was right and tactful. He is listless from the moment he enters with his mother and one gets the impression he is trying to tell her something. He dances with each of the Princesses and then listlessly wanders around the stage until he faces the big window at the back; for a time he stands there looking out with his back to the audience and one gets the impression that he is longing for Odette to appear and put an end to everyone's agony. In a sort of daze he returns to the throne and then apologises with sorrow to the poor waiting girls. His relief is very obvious when what he thinks is Odette appears disguised as a black swan. He danced a different variation, in the *pas de deux*, to the usual one, and for the first time in the ballet we got an opportunity of seeing how he danced. He has a nice easy style, soft *plié* and good elevation. He is a little weak on his turns and needs more schooling, preferably from a very strong male teacher. Nevertheless he proved to be a most distinguished visitor whom the audience obviously took to their hearts.

Another notable feature of the first act was the dancing of Graham Usher, taking over from Pirmin Trecu in the *pas de trois*. He is one of the most beautifully clean classical dancers that the Royal Ballet School has produced. Very well placed, nice soaring jumps and immaculate finish to everything and a joy to watch. Deidre Dixon and Brenda Taylor were both notable leading swans.

The Role for Linden

IT was a pity that the Critics' Circle annual binge took place on March 9, because it meant that the majority of critics missed Anya Linden's first performance in the title rôle of *Giselle* at Covent Garden. More of a pity because they have been straining at the leash in their attempts to say something good about her work of late and here was an occasion when they need not have strained at all. She was rather tentative at her first entrance but she soon warmed to the rôle and by the grape-gathering dance and her variation she was dancing with a greater surety than anything I have seen from her for some time. What tends to spoil her dancing in this act is a schoolgirl heartiness; she will suddenly force a movement instead of letting it flow naturally from the previous one and into the next. This was particularly noticeable in all her *arabesques* and in the *pirouettes* in the variation. But what was really outstanding about Linden in this act was her playing all through. From her first encounter with Albrecht the right relationship was established and there was no question of her being other than a simple peasant girl madly in love with what she thought to be a peasant boy. At the same time her relationships with her mother and the other villagers was natural and unforced and her wide-eyed awe at the magnificence of Bathilde was completely right. Never for a moment did she play outside the boundaries of the rôle and this playing seemed to inspire her fellow artists, because David Blair, as Albrecht, appeared to identify himself with the part to a far greater extent than usual.

How much this production now gains with Gerd Larsen and Pamela May as Berthe and Bathilde respectively! At last we have mature artists in these rôles which would bring us no shame in either Copenhagen or Moscow. Larsen makes Giselle's mother into a sweet-natured, over-anxious person who adores her daughter but worries about her health; while Pamela May gives Bathilde all the humility or nobility which is something very different to those snooty creatures who strut so senselessly through productions.

Which brings us to Linden's mad scene. It is girlish rage that brings on the derangement of her mind and gradually the sickness seeps through her limbs and body. Her few lucid moments — when she recognises familiar faces — are quite pathetic. It is as though she is suddenly faced by people she knew long, long ago and who were possibly imaginary characters even then. Every little movement and gesture seemed to have been carefully planned to show the gradual disintegration of the person. Her eyes become quite dead to this world and it was as though already she saw herself as a wili. Her final collapse is intensely moving. Apart from Yvette Chauviré, I don't think that I have seen any ballerina with the Royal Ballet play this scene so convincingly.

Her playing in the second act was a natural continuation of the first and not a completely different being as is so often the case. She was happy in her moments with the distraught Albrecht, fearful of the power of the Wili Queen, and gradually as

the act progressed one could sense that the supernatural was tightening its grip. She discarded the heartiness in her dancing of the first act but she still needs to acquire more sureness all through the second act. Nevertheless she gave a most creditable performance and she was helped throughout by the fine Dolin-like partnering of Blair.

It was *Giselle* with Fadeyechev that lit the spark in Nadia Nerina, let us hope that it is this *Giselle* which will light the spark in Linden, a spark that will ignite her other classical rôles. **P. W.**

"MODERN" DANCERS

at St. Pancras Town Hall: February 26.

IN a mixed concert of vocal and instrumental music during the St. Pancras Arts Festival were included dances given by the handful of professional "Modern" dancers in London, and other works largely using dance students of the non-classical idiom. Two ambitious efforts were to the famous *Prince Igor* choral dance, and to a selection of musical comedy numbers by Gershwin — with choreography by Jane Winearls and Colin Paterick respectively.

Of the first it can positively be said that it was a serious, and seriously worked out, attempt to reproduce an effect of savagery without copying the Fokine original; its stage patterns, its alternation of solo and group phases, and the deployment of the ensembles showed planning.

The Gershwin affair simply looked like rather dull musical comedy routine in the idiom of the 1930's; neither work was — balletically — helped by a small choir more ambitious than skilful. The able dancers (Ludmila Mlada, Eileen Cropley, Rosemary Cockayne, Thea van Damm and John Broome, Richard Brown), far from elevating the occasion, were beaten down much of the time by the surrounding body of inexpert students. Their professional attack was largely nullified by the chaotic swirling and shuffling of the ensembles supposedly supporting them.

Other items included two solos by Ludmila Mlada, a duet, *City Kids,* by Miss Mlada and John Broome, and the interesting triple study in feminine attitudes *Lylia* (unhappy title), first shown in the Modern Dance programme last November at Park Lane Theatre.

For all the dance numbers the stage and its lighting effects were insufficiently sympathetic. One has to admire choreographers who work under unhelpful conditions (and, Heaven knows, the unsubsidised ones have to keep trying), but certain limits of student-talent, shapeless stages, inadequate lighting, imprecise music, cannot be overcome by novel choreography, however determined. On this occasion these limitations worked against the talent and the courage of all the dancers involved. **A. V. Coton.**

TELEVISION

MISS JULIE

Excerpts given on Independent Television in Chelsea at Nine **on February 26. Choreography by Birgit Cullberg. Music, Rangström. Décor, Dan Snyder.**

Miss Julie ..... KIRSTEN SIMONE
Jean ..... ERIK BRUHN
Kristen ..... LIZZIE RODE

MISS JULIE is a ballet out of the ordinary run, with a career longer than many would probably have forecast after its first London performance nine years ago. Now it is not only danced by the Royal Swedish Ballet, but also by the American Ballet Theatre and by the Royal Danish Ballet, which supplied the dancers for this production.

Although more characters appear in the ballet than in the Strindberg play on which it has been based — for there is no equivalent to the *corps de ballet* in the play unless one takes into account the offstage festivities — Birgit Cullberg has been virtually faithful to her source.

Only the three main characters appear in the Kitchen Scene which was given on television. All danced very well, and here it must be emphasised that the ballet does require technically accomplished dancers: it is certainly not one of those dramatic works in which the dancers can get by solely on acting.

But there are dangers in presenting short extracts from dramatic works out of context on television. On this occasion the impression given was that Kirsten Simone and Erik Bruhn had underplayed their rôles, while Lizzie Rode overplayed the rôle of Kristen, which, incidentally, Cullberg herself originally danced. But Rode is a fine actress and perhaps her performance would not have seemed overacted in a theatre or in a television performance in which the two main rôles had been given stronger characterisations.

On the other hand, Simone's and Bruhn's relatively subdued interpretations may have been quite satisfactory if seen within the complete ballet. Probably, too, the great emphasis played on the dancing in this particular scene made it more difficult for them to get their characters across.

Bruhn was unable, for example, to depict the machinations by which he, the Valet, seduces the Lady — partly to prove himself and partly as a symbol of revolt because she represents an upper class which he envies and resents. The play was sometimes entitled *Countess Julie,* and in this

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brief extract Simone found it difficult to suggest the smugness, the authority and the prejudices of an aristocracy at its decaying worst. But when she returned to the stage after the seduction, conveying her wretchedness and disgust with herself for her excesses, she was able to achieve an intense effect of inescapable and inexorable doom.

The television setting was a reasonably severe frame for the action. The skeleton outline of the kitchen, minus roof, implied that television was literally "lifting the lid" off this sordid drama.

Erik Bruhn was in his best form. Even this non-classical costume could not conceal his fine technique — his excellent *pirouettes* with high *retiré* and turns *en attitude* and his smooth continuity of movement. Kirsten Simone's acting was perfectly adequate, although this scene gave her no chances to be spectacular. The camera direction was free from gimmicks, but the production ended rather feebly, with a faintly heard bell — presumably summoning the Valet to his Master upstairs.

E. C. M.

Dance and Dancers . . . . ABROAD

FRANCE

THE PARIS OPERA

ON January 28, Claire Motte and Jacqueline Rayet brought Harald Lander's *Printemps à Vienne* to life once again. If the brilliant execution of its first performance some years ago is now ancient history, attention must be drawn to the fresh authority and charming precision which has been revealed in this revival. The same two dancers are also worthy of praise, as is Alexandre Kalioujny, for their dancing in the "Florestan" *pas de trois* in *Divertissement*: in this same work there were also outstanding performances by Yvette Chauviré and Peter Van Dijk.

Tamara Toumanova's return in *Giselle* on February 4 proved to be a great disappointment. Where, one must ask, is the exquisite baby-ballerina of former days? She failed to dominate the rôle of innocent young peasant girl either from an expressive or from a technical point of view. *Phèdre* is undoubtedly a more suitable vehicle for her heavy acting and emaciated appearance. However, she displayed much more reserve than usual in her rendering of the Mad Scene. Supporting her, Youly Algaroff portrayed with nobility and intelligence the romantic Prince, while, as the Queen of the Wilis, Josette Amiel showed that she lacks Claude Bessy's stage presence.

CONCOURS DE DANSE

ON February 2, the Opéra's annual *concours de danse* took place. This traditional examination is the only means by which hierarchical advancement is possible, and only through it are the revisions of ranking, which are so necessary to the quality of the company, made. If for some this is a step up the ladder and a chance to improve their status, for others it can be a pitiless proof of their limitations and their lack of artistic qualities. In fact, necessary though this procedure doubtless is, it seems rather cruel in that it causes a great deal of suffering.

The gilded setting of the Opéra became filled during the early morning with enthusiastic and silent guests: critics, teachers, dancers and parents. Those who took their place on the jury table, which was isolated from the stage, were Mlles. Darsonval and Vaussard, and Mm. Hirsch, Bondeville, Lander, Kalioujny, Algaroff, Dupré, Mulys and Gevel.

The ringing of a bell announced the entry of the Second Quadrilles, who danced a classical *variation* followed by the waltz from *Suite de Danses*. In this Mlle. Fuger was outstanding for her gracefulness, Tribon for her originality, and Bouvier for her romantic style. The First Quadrilles proved less interesting, although Mlle. Bourillot, who danced a solo from *Suite en Blanc*, was outstanding among the *coryphées*.

The *variation* of the Shadow from *Mirages* was used as a means of testing the *Sujets*' powers of expression. Among the *Petits Sujets* special mention must be made of Mlle. Bassi, who has a certain softness. Among the *Grand Sujets*, Mlles. Bianchi and Vauchelle rivalled each other and were equally good.

The afternoon was set aside for the male dancers. Here the Quadrilles followed the compulsory test of technical ability — the Mazurka from *Suite en Blanc*. In the second division, Bonnefous excelled, and in the definitely less interesting first division, Refig showed promise. Atanasoff met with no serious competition in dominating his group, the *Coryphées*, and proved to be one of the white hopes of the Opéra.

This year someone had the happy idea of setting as a test for the *Sujets* an expressive *variation* from *Romeo and Juliet* (Tchaikovsky/Lifar). Here, special mention should be made of MM. Rousselle and Dussaigne among the *Petits Sujets*, and of Labisfi who is a very brilliant *Grand Sujet*.

Though it was not dazzling, this contest did enable one to appreciate the high degree of technical skill achieved by the Company, in which even the most minor members have to give as much care to the correct execution of a *variation* as the principals. It also had the advantage of drawing attention for once to dramatic expression, which has hitherto been neglected. But though throughout the company, while one can praise the movement of the head and shoulders and the carriage of the back, there is often a lack of softness and continuity, and more attention should be paid to the use of the arms.

Following this test, a new ranking was established and many promotions made. Thus Labis and Descombey have been appointed *premier danseurs*, Mlles. Bassi, Souard and Garry have become *Grand Sujets*: Mlles. Mallarte and Bourillot and Mm. Atanasoff and Franck have been named *Petits Sujets*: and Mlles. Guillée, Rémy and Cerez and Mm. Davesne and Refig have all become *Coryphées*. Mlles. Fuger, Tribon, Vanco, Bouvier and Loiseau, and Mm. Bonnefous and Schmuki have been promoted to the First Quadrille.

NEWS IN BRIEF

TOGETHER with Marcel Marceau, mime has entered the Sorbonne. On January 17, under the auspices of the Societé d'Esthétique, he gave a highly successful lecture. His different *exercises de style* met with an enormous ovation: Marceau climbed on to the platform and punctuated his free and lively talk with demonstrations.

ON January 28-29, Indrani and her Musicians gave recitals of Indian dance at the Musée Guimet under the sponsorship of the Association Français des Amis de l'Orient.

AT the invitation of Alfred Cortot and M. Feschotte, Director of the Ecole Normale de Musique, Serge Lifar gave a

THE FLAMES OF PARIS: The Opera of Brno came to Paris to stage this famous old Soviet ballet about the French Revolution, at the Alhambra Theatre. Photo: Lido.

series of lectures on historical dances — the *pavane, gaillard, minuet* and *gavotte.* Lifar has just returned from Algiers, where he gave a series of lectures which were illustrated by Claire Sombert, Irène Shorik and Youly Algaroff.

ON January 29, at a gala performance at the Théâtre de l'Alhambra, the Opera of Brno staged *Flamme de Paris.* The fiery echoes of the French Revolution and La Carmagnole cast rather a chill on the beautiful guests in their mink stoles. To Vaïnonen's score, this vast canvas evokes in large and rather naïve movement the Revolution of 1789. Despite the obvious appeal made to one's sympathies by such tremendous efforts, this grand spectacle of mime and staging is more memorable for the movements of large groups and for its conventional folk-lore than for the dancing. This is a super-production rather than a ballet, and many of its weaknesses are covered over by the stirring sound of *La Marseillaise.*

AFTER a tour of Spain and Portugal, Janine Charrat and her Ballet de France will visit Japan.

TESSA BEAUMONT has been chosen to play Roxane in Roland Petit's elaborate musical version of *Cyrano de Bergerac.*

THE Direction des Arts et Lettres, on which the administration of our National Theatres depends, has been put under the care of the Ministry of Culture under the guidance of André Malraux. M. Malraux must in the near future make a statement on the decisions concerning the reforms at the Opéra and Opéra-Comique. These were to have been announced some months ago, but they have always been postponed.

Marie-Françoise Christout.

AMERICA

BOLSHOI FOR AMERICA ?

AS we go to press, it appears that the long-awaited visit of the Bolshoi Ballet is on again and, according to last-minute information from impresario Sol Hurok from Moscow, the company is likely to open their American engagement at the Metropolitan Opera House on April 16 with Ulanova appearing in *Romeo and Juliet.* It also was said that *Giselle* would be in the repertoire, too. Other ballets, the length of stay in New York and other major cities to be visited were not available at press time.

HE LEADS A NEW GROUP: Alvin Ailey, the young Negro dancer who has the male dance lead in Jamaica, *recently showed his group at Y.M. & Y.W.H.A. with great success. Photos: Norman Maxon.*

MET. ALL-BALLET EVENING

THE Metropolitan Opera presented an all-ballet evening by four choreographers on Sunday evening, March 22. All but one of these ballets were still untitled as we went to press with the exception of *The Diamonds,* choreographed by Alexandra Danilova to a score by Beriot. The other ballets included a new work by Antony Tudor set to the last four songs of Richard Strauss and other Strauss music; a new work by Herbert Ross set to Francis Poulenc's *Organ Concerto* and with Nora Kaye as guest artist; and a new ballet by John Butler choreographed to Samuel Barber's *First Symphony.* As reported elsewhere in this issue, the dance contingent at the Met. has never been in better form and the time is now ripe for this bold advance forward. From advance reports this will be a momentous event and it will be reported at length in our May issue.

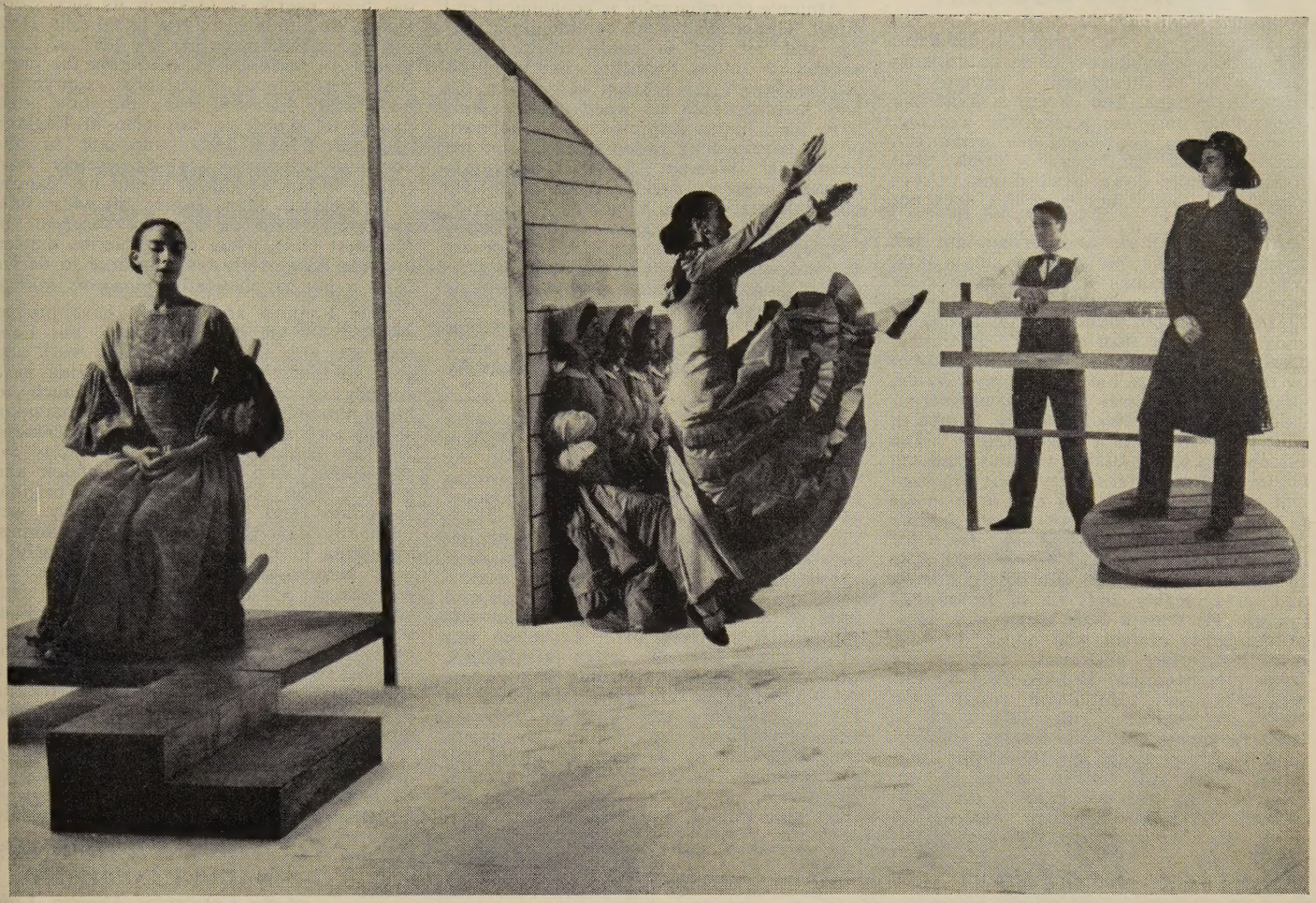
DANCE MAGAZINE AWARDS

DANCE MAGAZINE'S awards for 1958 were announced and presented recently in New York before an assemblage of dance notables. These were made to movie, television and stage star Gene Kelly; ballet dancers Alicia Alonso and Igor Youskevitch and to the late Doris Humphrey, one of the great figures of American modern dance.

Cited specifically for his Omnibus TV programme, "Dancing — It's a Man's Game," Gene Kelly's award was given because his "universal appeal on film, stage and TV has made a public of many millions aware that dancing can be a man's game". Alicia Alonso's citation read: "To Alicia Alonso, for illuminating the purity of classic dance with her radiant warmth — a dazzling combination which recently brought surprises and delight to still other audiences — in Russia." Youskevitch's award stated: "To Igor Youskevitch, for his unique balance of dignity, humility and caring — all of which have added a special 20th-Century dimension to the term 'Premier Danseur Noble'." The posthumous citation to Doris Humphrey was "for offering to the American Dance her priceless personal gifts of daring, intellect, faith and literacy".

ALVIN AILEY AND COMPANY

BY far the most interesting single dance programme of the mid-winter season was the first programme of Alvin Ailey and his Company that was presented at the Y.M. & Y.W.H.A. A young American Negro with notable technical power, a commanding theatre personality and exceptional choreographic talent, Ailey began his rise to fame in California, where he studied and performed with the Lester Horton Dance Theatre. When he came to New York, he studied with Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, Hanya Holm and at the Graham school. His first Broadway appearance was in *The House of Flowers* and, for the past year, he has been the male dance lead in *Jamaica.* During this period, he has assembled and rehearsed a remarkably gifted and exciting group of dancers. One of his dances, *Cinco Latinos,* was based on Brazilian-Caribbean forms; another, *Rite,* was a stunning interpretation of an Afro-Brazilian ritual. *Ariette Oubliée,* to Debussy's music, was lyric and full of movement invention, while *Blues Suite,* which takes place in a barrelhouse, is a wonderful theatre piece highlighting the blues dances of the Southern Negro. Certainly this is a young dancer-choreographer



APPALACHIAN SPRING *AS FILM: A scene from the film of Martha Graham's famous work to Aaron Copland music. Matt Turney is seated on the rostrum on the left. Martha Graham is dancing in the centre and is being watched by Stuart Hodes and Bertram Ross.*

with a brilliant future and a gifted dance group with equal promise.

BROOKLYN CIVIC BALLET COMPANY

THE Brooklyn Civic Ballet Company made its formal debut as a choreographic entity in its own right at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on March 15, too late for review in this issue. This company of twenty-four dancers has been in rehearsal since last autumn under the leadership of Alan Banks, its Artistic Director. The programme consisted of *Prelude Brillante,* to music by Robert Schumann; excerpts from *Nutcracker* and *Jeux d'Enfants,* to music by Bizet.

NEW DANCE FILM

A NEW dance film, *Negro Spirituals,* presents noted American modern dancer and choreographer Helen Tamiris (British audiences may recall her dances for *Annie Get Your Gun)* in a series of five of her early solo dances, two of them composed back in 1927. Though just filmed, these dances are of enormous historical interest, as John Martin, Dance Editor of *The New York Times,* explained in his introduction to the film. Equally noteworthy is the fact that today Miss Tamiris's dance style has the same dynamic power and kinesthetic excitement as when these works were first created. The spirituals, sung by Muriel Rahn and Eugene Brice and danced by Miss Tamiris, are, "Go Down, Moses," "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," "Git On Board," "Crucifixion," and "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho". Photographed in black and white by George Jacobson under the supervision of Marcus Blechman, this film is a William Skipper Production.

ON THE TOWN

INTERESTINGLY enough, the off-Broadway revival of this fourteen-year-old Jerome Robbins-Leonard Bernstein musical has a better book, a better score, better lyrics and a more integrated use of dance than any of the *new* musicals presented *on* Broadway this season. *On The Town,* as everyone knows by now, was the logical outgrowth of *Fancy Free,* the 1944 ballet that overnight established Jerome Robbins and Leonard Bernstein. Today, this musical serves as a wonderful reminder of what one side of life was like in New York during World War II. More importantly, it also demonstrates to a remarkable extent how even then Jerome Robbins viewed character, plot and circumstances in terms of dance. Almost the entire plot is advanced in terms of movement or dance as is today's *West Side Story.*

Joe Layton, the present choreographer, never saw the original version, but he, too, has used dance and movement to heighten the plot and action and he has succeeded brilliantly. Harold Lang, of the original cast of *Fancy Free,* gives one of the best acting, singing and dancing performances of his career. Jack Venza has recreated some wonderful settings in almost no space at all and Peter Howard and an eight-piece orchestra provide better music than any Broadway pit band of three times the size.

NEWS IN BRIEF

THE New York City Ballet presented an all-Stravinsky programme for the Canadian Broadcasting Company in Montreal.

GEORGE BALANCHINE has been in Paris, where he staged his *Gounod Symphony* for the Paris Opéra Ballet.

ANTON DOLIN gave a series of four master classes at Ballet Arts School during late March while some of the soloists from London's Festival Ballet were in New York to appear on the Ed Sullivan television programme.

NOTED dance-mime Angna Enters gave a solo programme during March in New York for the benefit of the Phoenix Theatre Fund.

VIOLETTE VERDY and Jacques d'Amboise, of the New York City Ballet, were flown to Hollywood for a week-end so that they could appear on the Dinah Shore Show on nation-wide television.

LES BALLETS AFRICAINS, which has already appeared in London some time ago, has had a great success in New York and on its cross-country tour.

Arthur Todd.

A WEDDING BOUQUET

Continued from page 21

as successful as they might have been. Meanwhile, Josephine seems to be drinking rather a lot of champagne — perhaps too much champagne. The chorus is muttering *("Josephine may not attend the wedding, Josephine may not attend the wedding")*, but Josephine continues to drink until Josephine falls down dead drunk. *"Josephine will leave "* but even this does not prove simple.

At last the Bride and Groom are left together, and she has changed into a little white tutu, although it is not quite clear why. They dance together, she like the sugariest of sugar plums, he, faintly bored and rather more than a little disinterested. The Bride runs off, and would be followed by the Bridegroom, but he is stopped by the Orator (N.B., this was a subsequent interpolation, I believe, by Constant Lambert), who asks: *"What is a clever saucer?"* The Bridegroom looks affably vacuous, and the Orator continues: *"It is very likely practised and even has toes. It has tiny little things to shake; and were it not for its delicate blue colour would there be any reason for anyone to perceive a difference?"* The Bridegroom smiles with effortless politeness and an agreeably alert air of refurbished interest. He does a little dance with some of the ladies present who appear to have been his former mistresses; most of the ladies present appear to have been his former mistresses. *("Josephine differs from Fanny and Catherine.")* But Julia is still an embarrassment. The Bride returns, and perhaps overcome with marital delight, collapses. Julia, still forlorn, is left disconsolately alone with her Pépe as the ballet closes. *("Bitterness, bitterness, bitterness is entertained by all.")*

Ashton's choreography is economical and direct. The groupings are continually arresting and yet not so contrived that they assume an undue formality. Everything is produced with the greatest care, from the tiny moment such as when the Peasants have their hands inspected for cleanliness, or the admonishing raised forefinger of the formidable Webster, to the deliciously managed entrance for the Bride along two obliquely placed lines of guests. The parody of a Petipa *pas de deux* for the happy couple, and the Bridegroom's wickedly satirical solo, with its ridiculous culmination of hops *en tournant*, probably provide the most memorable dance passages. But the light and fluent dance for the mysterious Guy, and the solemn pomposities for some of the more staid guests, are equally delightful.

The décor and costumes, which were executed under the supervision of William Chappell, seem completely right for the ballet. Berners created a charming, charming front curtain depicting an immense bouquet of melancholy pink roses flanked on each side by a Bride and Bridegroom of unparalleled respectability. The setting itself consisted of a decorative border and a backcloth quite plain except for a large oval inset of a house overlooking a lake and surrounded by trees. (This backcloth was in fact taken from the design on a carpet, which Berners saw at Gertrude Stein's home in Bilignin.) The costumes, suggestive of Queen Alexandra and Cecil Beaton, are admirably appropriate, while the music, also of course by Berners, is tuneful and sophisticated, with an inconsequential frothiness that is far more French and Ibert than English and Bliss.

Ashton was lucky in his original cast, and has been nearly as lucky in its successors. Helpmann, looking a little like Leslie Henson and a little more like the hero of René Clair's *An Italian Straw-Hat*, gave the finest comic performance of his career, supremely, pathetically funny. I think the only other dancer to appear in this rôle in England has been John Hart, adequate to the occasion although less desperately harrassed — but Alexander Grant has danced it in America. Mary Honer, all white tulle and giggle, had an effective successor in Margaret Dale, while Nadia Nerina danced the rôle delightfully but appeared to derive from a less emphatically *bourgeois milieu*.

Both Fonteyn and Shearer have proved excellent as the demented Julia, but Fonteyn was able to go through the work and give no hint that she was appearing in a comedy, so providing just the touch of bitter almonds needed to give this marzipan its characteristic whiff of cyanide sweetness. No one could have made *"no plans for the winter"* with more tipsy abandon and gentility than did June Brae, the original Josephine, and the unknown Guy was brilliantly danced by the unknown Somes, appearing in his first major rôle nearly a year before his famed solo "début" in *Horoscope*. Alexis Rassine seemed no real substitute for him in this, any more than was Gilbert Vernon in Harold Turner's part of Paul. Pépé has been notable for introducing two "littlest little girls" to the Royal Ballet — Julia Farron and Annette Page. The rest of the cast have all been admirable.

It only remains to be said that *A Wedding Bouquet* needs, and needs badly, to be revived at Covent Garden — otherwise bitterness will be entertained by all. By all.

Ballet Dates

THE ROYAL BALLET I
at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

March
18 *Danses Concertantes, Giselle* (Nerina, Blair)
19 *Harlequin in April, La Fête Etrange, Job*
20 *La Valse, Giselle* (Grey, Selling)
21 **(M)** *Coppelia.* Performance by the Royal Ballet School (Sibley, Usher)
21 **(E)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair)
23 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Linden, Blair)
24 *Petrushka, La Valse, Job*
25 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Grey, Selling)
26 *Petrushka, La Valse, Job*
28 **(M)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Grey, Selling)
28 **(E)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
30 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Grey, Selling)
31 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair)

April
2 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Grey, Selling)
4 **(M)** *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Linden, Blair)
6 *The Prince of the Pagodas* (Beriosova, Blair)
8 *The Prince of the Pagodas* (Beriosova, Blair)
11 **(M)** *La Fête Etrange, Harlequin in April, The Lady and the Fool*
11 **(E)** *La Fête Etrange, Harlequin in April, The Lady and the Fool*
13 *The Prince of the Pagodas* (Beriosova, Blair)
15 *Danses Concertantes, La Fête Etrange, Petrushka*
16 *The Lady and the Fool, Harlequin in April, Petrushka*
21 *The Firebird, Danses Concertantes, Job*
25 **(M)** *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
25 **(E)** *Coppélia* (Park, Burne), *La Valse*
27 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
30 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Nerina, Blair)

May
2 **(M)** *Danses Concertantes, Petrushka, Les Patineurs*
6 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Seymour, MacLeary)
9 **(E)** *Coppélia* (Alexander, Britton), *La Valse*
11 *Les Patineurs, Giselle* (Heaton, MacLeary)
13 *Les Patineurs, Giselle* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
16 *Les Rendez-vous* (1st perf.), *La Fête Etrange, The Firebird*

Programmes subject to alterations

LONDON'S FESTIVAL BALLET

March
16 The Empire Theatre, Sunderland
Three-month Continental tour starts in April.

BALLET RAMBERT

March
16 The Alhambra Theatre, Bradford
30 The Theatre Royal, Exeter

April
6 The Theatre Royal, Bath
13 The Opera House, Cheltenham
20 The Opera House, Jersey
27 The White Rock Pavilion, Hastings

May
25 The Sadler's Wells Theatre, London (2 weeks)

June
8 The Essoldo Theatre, Brighton

July
15 Jacob's Pillow, Mass., U.S.A. (3 weeks)

TAMARA TOUMANOVA
with Wladimir Oukhtomsky
at the Sadler's Wells Theatre, London, on April 13 for 4 weeks.

Programme for 1st week: *Adagio Sentimental; Grand Pas Espagnol; Phaeton; Dying Swan; El Destino; Eternal Love; Florinda and Angelino.*
Programme for 2nd week: *Theme and Variation, Nutcracker Suite, Gamayoun, The Warrior, Death of a Toreno, Grand Pas Tzigane.*
Programme for 3rd week: *L'Epoque Romantique, Le Chevalier et la Princesse, Romeo and Juliet, Faith and Strength, Mazurka, Grand Pas Hongroise, Sylvia Pas de Deux.*
Programme for 4th week: To be announced.

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May
15 The New Theatre, Oxford
25 The Hippodrome, Birmingham

June
1 The Palace Theatre, Manchester (2 weeks)

LUDMILLA TCHERINA'S BALLET COMPANY
at the Cambridge Theatre, London, March 19 (confirm with daily press for full details).

PILAR LOPEZ AND HER BALLET ESPANOL
at Princes Theatre, London, May 12 (confirm with daily press for full details).

INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVALS

The following have already announced that there will be ballet in their festivals. Details to be published when available.
WIESBADEN : May 7-June 7
BORDEAUX : May 19-June 3 (London's Festival Ballet).
VIENNA : May 30-June 21.
COPENHAGEN : 10th Danish Ballet Festival. May 18-31.
Repertoire: *La Sylphide, Coppélia, Romeo and Juliet, Apollon Musagète, Harlequinade, Miss Julie, Giselle, Etudes, The Moon Reindeer*
STOCKHOLM : May 31-June 14.
BATH : June 3-13. Dancers of the Royal Swedish Ballet.
SPOLETO : June 11-July 12.
HOLLAND FESTIVAL: June 15-July 15.
GRANADA : June 20-July 2.
DUBROVNIK : July 1-August 31.
SANTANDER : July 25-August 31.
ATHENS : August-September
BESANCON : September 3-13.
BERLIN : September 20-October 6.

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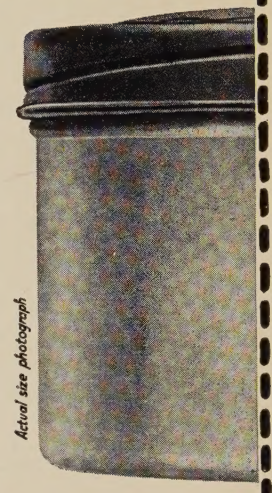

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